



## *News and Highlights*

2nd 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.

## Jail Project Update

The Jail Steering Committee has been holding regular meetings to ensure that the project moves forward as scheduled, with spring of 2027 being the target date to occupy the new jail.

The County is currently pursuing site locations to accommodate the new jail.

The Design and Operations Committee is actively working on the design and functionality of the proposed new jail facility. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was sent out to solicit qualified architectural engineering firms that will respect relationships, budgets, and timelines. Their role will be to provide a team with expertise in design features, space efficiency, and planning concepts as well as thorough evaluation of the security, compliance, and county-specific needs. The Design & Operations Committee's last meeting was mostly spent on reviewing the RFPs that were submitted and making a date to schedule engineering firm interviews. Once an engineering firm can be decided, contracts will need to be ironed out, and then onto the design phase. The design phase has many stages and will incorporate the pre-design. During the pre-design phase, the Architectural firm will meet with the county to learn about the site location and the desired design for the future building. This gives the engineer an in-person site analysis to allow the most accurate information for the project. This is also the time where the architect researches local zoning, and land use restrictions.

At the same time, the County has submitted a Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) application to the House and Senate with the intent of obtaining approval to allow citizens to vote this November on how to best finance the cost of constructing the new jail. While no one voluntarily chooses higher taxes, a study conducted by the University of Minnesota Extension Service showed that a least 50% of the taxable sales would be made from non-county residents. You can find the full report on the Beltrami County Website. By the end of May, legislators will determine whether or not they will authorize Beltrami County to use a Sales Tax as an option to finance the cost of the new jail, which would then allow citizens to vote on the issue.

The next phase will be schematic design. This phase is when the architectural firm will begin to translate the county's needs and feasibility concepts down in a conceptual drawing. This may involve drawings sketches, 3D renderings, floor plans, building elevations, HVAC and plumbing concepts.

The Design and Operations Committee has toured some newly constructed corrections facilities across the State to gather much needed real time information to assist with the schematic design, with special consideration being made to structure, layout, function, IT, maintenance, and procedures. The ultimate goal is a safe, secure, and efficient facility.

If all goes well, the County will have an architectural engineering firm chosen by the end of May and a conceptual design determined by the end of the summer. This will allow the project to remain on schedule and will bring those who are housed out of county back to their hometown. The construction document phase is when the design becomes a reality. The architect usually produces a couple sets of detailed drawings that specify every detail of the final design. One set is called the construction set that remains on-site throughout the construction process. The other set is called the permit set, which is sent to the local permitting authorities, in this case will be the city of Bemidji. The Design and Operations Committee have a few more jail tours to collect the data to assist with the following construction documents phase.

Next is the building permit phase. At this point the architect must submit the permit documents to the city, which can be a slow process due to needing to review for structural integrity, adherence to zoning laws and building codes.

The Jail Steering Committee will continue to maintain regular communication as progress is made, and citizens may also stay up-to-date with milestones, reports, presentations, and committee minutes on the County website: [https://www.co.beltrami.mn.us/Departments/Law%20enforcement/Jail\\_Project.html](https://www.co.beltrami.mn.us/Departments/Law%20enforcement/Jail_Project.html).

As this process continues to move forward, the Jail Steering Committee's priority remains to keep the community informed of any progress that is made as well as the day-to-day operations of the current jail. The MN Department of Corrections continues to enforce capacity restrictions, and on average the jail is housing 45 to 67 individuals out of county at a substantial cost.

With costs of everything all across the nation rising our Design and Operations Committee recognizes how urgent this project is to be on time and within budget.

*~Submitted by: Jail Administrator, Calandra Allen*



**Architectural Engineering Firm Selection Committee** (from left to right): Construction Engineers Project Manager Ben Matson, County Administrator Tom Barry, County Commissioner District 1 Craig Gaasvig, MIS Director Kevin Warne, Community Member Kate Repko, County Commissioner District 5 John Carlson, Jail Administrator Captain Calandra Allen and not pictured: Facilities Management Director Steve Shadrick and Sheriff Jason Riggs.

# Veterans Home Update

The Bemidji Veterans Home will soon be serving veterans in the Northland. For over a decade, the Veterans Task Force has advocated for a Veterans Home in northern Minnesota to care for its aging veteran population. Their dedication to this cause was unwavering, with their efforts coming to fruition as the facility prepares to welcome its first residents, families, and employees to the Bemidji campus.

The facility is built upon 15 acres of land donated by Sanford Hospital at 920 Anne Street NW. It resembles a Northwood cabin built around a town center. Four households, each consisting of 18 residents, provide 72 residential units with private bathrooms. The town center features a small coffee shop/café, theater/meeting room, family dining room, meditation room, chapel, barber and beauty services, club room, and local transportation services.

Residents will also have an assortment of services to meet their physical needs. This includes skilled nursing care, including specialized dementia care; medical services with 24-hour nursing care; social services; rehabilitation services, including physical therapy and independent activity, specialized memory care programming approaches; mental/behavioral health services; and oral health and nutrition services.

The Bemidji Veterans Home is currently 82% completed, on track to receive its first residents this fall. The admissions process has received a tremendous response, with over 200 application submissions so far. All applications are evaluated in the order they are received, so you are encouraged to apply today. If you do not require immediate placement, you can request that your name be placed on the inactive waiting list.

Future residents must require skilled nursing care at the time of admission, and residents must meet one of the two criteria. 1. Veterans must have been discharged under honorable conditions from any branch of the U.S. armed forces and a resident of Minnesota. 2. The spouse of an eligible Veteran who is at least 55 years old and

meets residency requirements. In addition, veteran and Veteran spouses must meet Minn. Stat. 197.447. More information about the admission process can be found at [NewHomesAdmissions@state.mn.us](mailto:NewHomesAdmissions@state.mn.us).

To meet the needs of our residents living in the Bemidji Veterans Home, the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs has been seeking applicants to fill approximately 165 positions. They offer a variety of career paths with competitive pay, full and part-time status, paid training with career enhancement, and educational opportunities. If you are interested in a career with the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs and want to know more about current job openings, visit [mn.gov/careers](http://mn.gov/careers) and click the "Search Jobs" navigation bar. In the "Search Jobs" window, type MDVA and hit Enter.

Bemidji is also looking to partner with local businesses to assist the veterans home. If you own a business in areas of audiology, podiatry, dental care, barber/beautician, hospice, mental health/psychiatric services, equipment repair, laundry service, pharmaceutical/prescription services, etc., please get in touch with our Bemidji Veterans Home Campus Administrator Kevin Gish at 651-802-3335 to see if you are a match for the type of services available.

The Bemidji and surrounding communities profoundly respect and support those who served, which is illustrated by a total of 72 volunteers who have already signed up to help the residents at the Veterans Home. If you would like to volunteer or donate to the Veterans Home, please get in touch with Kevin, and he will add your name to the growing list.

Contact your County Veteran Service Office for any other process questions. Veterans living in Beltrami County can contact Veteran Service Officer Shane Gustafson at 218-333-4178 or Assistant Veteran Service Officer Luke Wilkowski at 218-333-4177.

*~Submitted by: Veterans Service Officer, Shane Gustafson*

## Economic Assistance Division Director



Curt Anderson is the new Economic Assistance Division Director for Beltrami County Health & Human Services. He is from Blackduck, MN and graduated from Bemidji State University with a bachelor's degree in 1991. After graduation Curt was commissioned into the United States Army. He served for 28 years commanding Soldiers at multiple levels and in combat. Besides combat duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, Curt has served in Europe, Asia, Central America, Africa and earned two master's degrees. He retired in 2019 and moved his family back to the Bemidji area. Curt has served the county for almost four years. The previous three years he has been the supervisor for a team of 23 members who provide a broad array of benefits and services to our county individuals and families. Curt is excited to take on this new role and will focus on personalized and coordinated service across the Division to ensure our customers are treated with dignity, compassion, and respect.

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### WIC

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program provides food, nutrition counseling, and access to health care services for low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5. WIC is effective in improving the health of pregnant women, new mothers, and their children. WIC is an evidence based program (EBP) linked to longer gestation periods, higher birthweights, and lower infant mortality. Our dietitians are excited to announce that WIC will resume in-person appointments in August of 2023. For more information call 218-333-8140.

### Bemidji Area Breastfeeding Coalition

Public Health is a member and key leader in providing support of breastfeeding. Starting May 1 and meeting weekly on Mondays at various locations in the community, the coalition will be leading a breastfeeding support group. Check out their Facebook page or contact Alyssa Peterson at 218-222-8110 for more information.



## Public Health Division Director

Amy Bowles is the new Public Health Division Director and Community Health Board Administrator of Beltrami County. She is responsible for planning and implementing public and family health services for the county; developing the strategic and quality improvement plans for the county; writes, maintains, and evaluates Community Health Assessment, WIC, Maternal Child Health programs, and Family Home Visiting. Amy joined the Health and Human Services team April 10, 2023. Prior to accepting her position, she worked for Sanford Health as the Nursing Manager for Women's and Children's services and a Supervisor for Homecare. Prior to her tenure at Sanford, she worked for Fargo Cass Public Health in North Dakota. Amy has a passion for serving and empowering others and isn't afraid to dream big. Her desire to lead and connect with the community is what brought Amy to Bemidji. Amy completed her Masters of Science with an Emphasis in Leadership in the Health Care Systems at Grand Canyon University, Bachelors of Science in Nursing at North Dakota State University, and Associate of Art and Science at North Dakota State College of Science. Amy feels blessed to have the opportunity to serve in this role and looks forward to collaborating with the people of Beltrami County.

# 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:



## J-Turns, Center Buffers and Roundabouts

Mention J-turns, center buffer or roundabout in a conversation and you're bound to elicit comments. It is also very common to hear the question of Why? Why change that intersection? Why change that road? The short answer is these changes were done to save lives.

Providing safe roads is the core component of what the County Highway Department does, just like other city, state and federal highway departments. We continually make safety improvements to our road system through ongoing maintenance and construction projects. However, we cannot engineer our roads to zero crashes. While driving people make many decisions and we cannot prevent every bad decision. Maybe someday fully automated driving systems will remove decision making, but for now we can do things like reduce the number of decisions a person has to make, or provide a warning system, or we can help reduce the severity if there is a crash. J-turns, center buffers and roundabouts do just that.

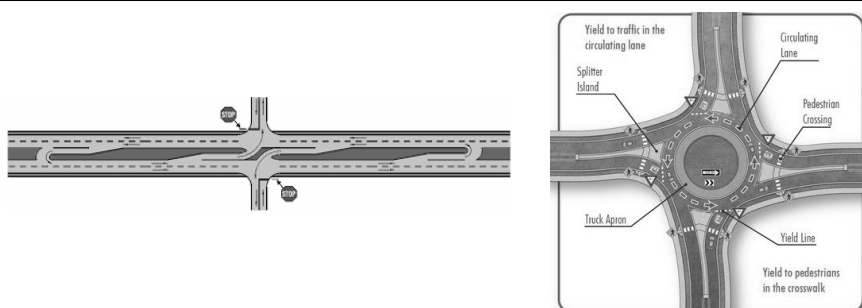
J-turns have been installed on Trunk Highway 2 and 71 in recent years. They require drivers to take a right before being able to do a U-turn 600 +/- feet down the road in order to turn to the left. This limits drivers to crossing traffic from one direction at a time thereby reducing the decisions that have to be made. Instead of looking for sufficient gaps in 4 lanes of traffic the driver only has to look at two lanes of traffic at a time.

A center buffer was installed on CSAH 9, Cardinal Rd, a few years ago. The previous wider shoulders were narrowed and this space was moved to the center of the road creating a buffer between traffic lanes. This reconfiguration provides a shoulder on both the right and left sides of the traffic lane. Rumbles strips and wider stripes were also added. These warning systems help keep traffic from leaving their lane, both left and right. Additionally, the center buffer is striped for no passing which helps prevent a passing vehicle from hitting a vehicle turning onto the road in a head on crash.

Numerous roundabouts have been constructed in the area over the last 5 years. Roundabouts are being utilized at intersections because they are efficient at moving traffic and safer. They eliminate left turns against traffic and T-bone type of crashes. Vehicle speed is also reduced so even if a crash does occur it is less likely to cause serious injury or a fatality.

Traffic safety is important for the County Highway Department and it needs to be a priority for everyone. Everybody needs to view any death or serious injury on our roads as unacceptable. Everyone can help reduce traffic fatalities and injuries with these simple actions: Buckle up. Drive at safe speeds. Pay attention. Never drive impaired.

~Submitted by: Highway Engineer, Bruce Hasbargen



This summer Beltrami County will be constructing a roundabout located on Irvine Avenue (County State Aid Highway 15) at the Anne Street (CSAH 52) intersection. Roundabouts are very efficient in handling traffic and help improve the safety of the intersection by reducing crashes that cause serious injuries and fatalities. We occasionally receive questions or comments on roundabouts and want to share information on the common topics.

### Not everyone knows how to drive a roundabout

- Driver knowledge has increased but to help refresh, drivers shall:
- If there are multiple lanes - choose the proper lane when approaching a roundabout. For example, the right lanes for the roundabout on TH 71 are for right turns only. For the roundabout at the High School the east bound right lane is for right turns only and the west bound right lane is for thru traffic only. Look for the road signs to understand which lane is proper for each traffic movement.
- Reduce speed. - Drivers approaching roundabout need to be prepared to stop if necessary.
- Yield to traffic within the roundabout. - Traffic is moving slowly, enter when there is a gap.
- Proceed to the right. - All traffic goes counterclockwise.
- Exit roundabout at the desired exit point. Do not stop when in the roundabout.
- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks.
- Give large vehicles like trucks or buses room to maneuverer.
- If there is an emergency vehicle, exit the roundabout and then pull over. - Do not stop or change lanes within a roundabout.

### The center island is too high to see over

To enter the roundabout you need to yield to traffic in the roundabout that is to the immediate left, not across from you. You do not have to wait for the entire roundabout to be clear of traffic. Traffic is moving slowly, you can enter when there is a gap.

### Traffic does not yield properly

Both lanes on Division entering the roundabout at the High School need to yield to traffic. The west bound thru traffic in the right lane is required to yield to traffic in the roundabout, just like the left lane. All entering traffic needs to yield to traffic within the roundabout. Traffic leaving the High School and heading west in the roundabout has the right of way.

### Semi-trucks have a hard time navigating a roundabout

Modern roundabouts are designed for semi-truck traffic. The center circle in the roundabout includes a truck apron that accommodates the tracking of the semi-trailer. Areas on the outside of the circle can also be designed to accommodate even longer loads such as trailer houses or oversized loads. The curb and gutter in these areas are designed at a lower height to help minimize load shifting.

There are also two videos on the County's website that help answer questions on roundabouts:

<http://www.co.beltrami.mn.us/Departments/Highway/Road%20Construction.html>

~Submitted by: Highway Engineer, Bruce Hasbargen



## Headwater's SWAT Team

The Headwaters SWAT Team (HST) was established over 30 years ago and provides highly trained and motivated personnel to be used in those instances where specialized skills are required to manage situations where regular patrol officer resources would not be sufficient to resolve a situation.

The safety and preservation of all human life is the HST primary objective. The team accomplishes this objective by acting as a support unit which is specially trained and equipped to resolve critical high risk situations. Containment of suspects and negotiation procedures are the HST first responsibilities.

The HST is a multi-jurisdictional team tasked with handling critical incidents in Beltrami County, City of Bemidji, and Clearwater County. The HST has been called to assist the U.S. Marshal's Fugitive Task Force, Mahnomen County Sheriff's Office, Koochiching County Sheriff's Office, Red Lake Tribal Police Department and others for the apprehension of dangerous and wanted fugitives. The HST also stands by to support other SWAT Teams in our area such as Hubbard/Wadena SWAT and Cass County SWAT.

The HST currently has 17 members comprised of deputies/officers from the Beltrami County Sheriff's Office and Bemidji Police Department. Of these 17 operators, 6 are assigned to support roles and maintain the equipment and vehicles utilized by the team. Additionally, 2 team members are designated snipers and 10 members are assigned to the entry team.

The HST also has a Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) made up of sworn officers and deputies and civilian employees. The CNT deploys on all

SWAT missions and regularly trains with the tactical element of the HST.

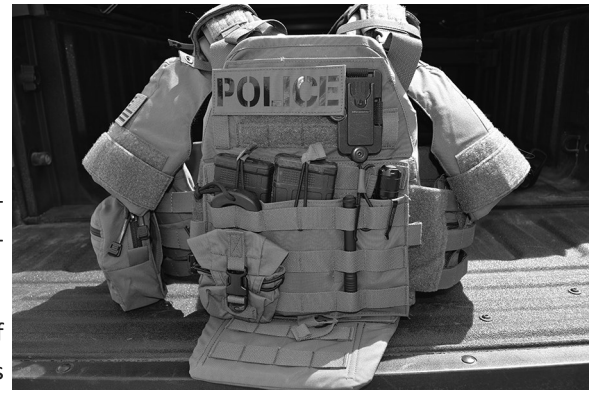
During the summer of 2022, The HST was awarded a generous

grant from the George Neilson Grant foundation to aid in the procurement of new body armor for our team members. Because of the high risk environments in which HST members work they require body armor with a higher level of protection, greater than what our patrol officers and deputies wear on a day to day basis. The HST was recently outfitted with the new body armor this spring of 2023.

The HST also maintains and operates an RG-31 armored vehicle, which was procured through a federal government surplus program. The RG-31 provides ballistic protection to team members when going into high risk situations. This vehicle also provides rescue options to civilians caught in the middle of an ongoing and active situation in which law enforcement's priority would be to remove them from such a situation immediately for their safety.

The HST is a part time team made up of law enforcement officers who work other assignments on a day to day basis. These officers volunteer to serve as part of the HST, taking on that extra responsibility and risk as part of their service to our communities.

*~Submitted by: Investigator, Jade Hayft*



## Sheriff's Office K9 Program

The Beltrami County Sheriff's Office K9 program is vital in order to provide safe and effective service to the citizens of Beltrami County. The K9 program has a long history beginning in 1991, when Deputy Randy Fitzgerald and K9 Bandit started patrolling Beltrami County. At one time as many as four K9s were working in the patrol division. Today, the K9 program consists of two handlers and two dual-purpose K9s who are certified in both narcotic detection and patrol tasks. With the K9s being dual-purpose they serve a variety of roles as they assist Deputies on patrol, the Paul Bunyan Drug Task Force, Headwaters S.W.A.T, and other area law enforcement agencies.

The current K9 teams are Deputy Beckwith with K9 Deuce and Deputy Hanson with K9 Rip. K9 Deuce is a two-year-old German Shepard from the Czech Republic. German Shepard's are commonly used for law enforcement due to their good temperament and protective instincts. K9 Rip is a three-year-old Belgian Malinois. Recently Belgian Malinois use in law enforcement has increased due to the breed being extremely intelligent, athletic and with similar protective traits as a German Shepard.

The bond between a K9 handler and his four-legged partner is noteworthy, as the K9s live with the deputies and become part of the deputy's family. These bonds continue on after a K9 retires, as the dogs commonly spend their remaining years with their handler.

K9s are most frequently used for searching due to their keen sense of smell which is 50 times as powerful as a human's sense of smell. Having a K9 on-scene allows Deputies to locate narcotics, firearms, evidence, or fleeing/hiding suspects more efficiently that may not have been found without the K9's assistance.

Within the last 12 months, Beltrami County K9's have assisted in the recovery of over 20lbs of methamphetamine, 80 grams of cocaine, 60 grams of Fentanyl, 5 firearms, and 33 felony arrests within 53 K9 deployments.

Historically, the Beltrami County Sheriff's Office K9 program has been largely funded by the donations from generous local businesses and local individuals who realize the importance of having a strong K9 program. The Sheriff's Office is extremely grateful for the community's support and with their continued support we will strive to provide the best service to our community.

*~Submitted by: Deputy Tony Hanson, K9 Handler for Rip*



# Automated External Defibrillators—AEDs



In the summer of 2022, the Beltrami County Sheriff's Office took part in a survey involving the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in our community. The survey was completed and returned to the University of Minnesota in Crookston.

tion was for them to take ownership of the unit and provide batteries and pads as needed. Currently the Sheriff's Office has donated around 30 units to several organizations within and around Beltrami County including:

Area First Responders	Beltrami County Solid Waste
Gene Dillon Elementary	Bemidji Airport
Shevlin Fire Department	Northwoods Coalition for Battered Woman Shelter
Beltrami County Historical Society	Bemidji Boys and Girls Club

The survey was a part of a grant through the Helmsley Trust, with the purpose of providing new AEDs in several counties throughout Minnesota. The Sheriff's Office benefited from the grant, which provided Stryker AEDs to be deployed by deputies. These Stryker AED's have Wi-Fi connection and will provide current data to be used for research at the University of Minnesota Medical School. After the AED is used it will connect through Wi-Fi and all the data from the use will be uploaded and available to the Medical School. Along with the information provided for research, a copy of the data will be given to the Sheriff's Office and we can review details of the life-saving efforts.

This grant also provides batteries and AED pads for 8 years. An interesting tidbit is that once data from the AED use is uploaded, a set of pads is automatically sent out within 48 hours to replace the pads used.

Once all the new AEDs were deployed into the field, the Sheriff's Office was left with 35 working but used AEDs. It was decided that the Sheriff's Office would find organizations in the community who could benefit from having an AED. The only stipula-

There are a few other organizations that have expressed interest and will likely be taking the remaining AEDs. We also have several of our original AEDs that were purchased by the county and have outlived their service time. These will be turned over to the University of Minnesota and disposed of properly.

This grant has benefited the Sheriff's Office by providing new technology and equipment that should last another 20 years. It has also provided us with an opportunity to help the community and provide AED's in locations where they may be used immediately and provide a better chance of survival. According to the American Heart Association, bystander use of an AED has 57.1 percent chance of a favorable outcome versus a 32.7 percent chance of a favorable outcome when the AED is used by first responders, due to the timeliness that they are used.

~Submitted by: Sgt Robert Billings

## Boating Safety

The Beltrami County Sheriff's Office welcomes the summer weather and upcoming boating season. If you have not done so already, now is the time for boat maintenance and checking those registration tags to ensure they are current. Carefully look over your life jackets and discard all with broken straps or ripped/frayed material. Life jackets are your lifeline while on the water so please maintain them just as you do your watercraft.

Let's discuss a few important boating safety topics:

### Life Jackets

State law requires children under 10 years old to wear a properly fitted life jacket while a boat is underway.

A readily accessible and wearable life jacket is required for each person onboard a boat, this includes canoes, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, paddleboats and waterfowl boats.

One Type IV throwable device is required on all boats 16 feet or longer (except canoes and kayaks) and must be immediately available.

Personal watercraft operators and passengers must each wear a life jacket at all times.

It is important to remember some infants are too small for any life jacket, even though the label may say 0–30 pounds. In general, babies under 6 months or 16 pounds are too small for a life jacket to be effective due to the size of their head compared to their body. If your infant is under 6 months old or 16 pounds, please wait until the baby is a little older before taking them boating.

**NOTE:** Fastening a boat cushion to a car seat is not considered a lawful flotation device for an infant and could trap the baby underwater if your boat capsized.

**FOR YOUR SAFETY, WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND EVERYONE ON BOARD WEARS A LIFE JACKET AT ALL TIMES.**

### Boating While Impaired (BWI)

Operating a motorboat while under the influence of alcohol, a controlled substance (or its metabolite), or an intoxicating substance is unlawful.

Operators who are impaired may be required to take tests by an enforcement officer to determine the presence of these substances. There is a penalty for refusal.

BWI test failures, convictions, and refusals are recorded on the violator's driver's license record.

The alcohol concentration for impaired operation is **.08**.

Possible penalties for impaired operation include: Fines, possible jail time and loss of motorboat/off-road vehicle and motor vehicle operating privileges.

In addition to the above penalties, those who refuse testing will also be subject to a separate and more severe criminal charge for refusal and loss of their motorboat, off-road vehicle and motor vehicle operating privileges for one year, immediately upon refusal. The BWI law does not prohibit drinking alcoholic beverages aboard boats nor having an open bottle. The BWI law applies to operators of motorboats that are not anchored, beached, moored, docked or being rowed or propelled by non-mechanical means at the time of the offense.

Alcohol is involved in about 30 percent of fatal boat accidents in Minnesota. Drunk boating is drunk driving, designate a sober ride on the water and on the road. **BOAT SAFE – BOAT SOBER!**

The Beltrami County Sheriff's Office wishes everyone a safe and enjoyable boating season. We'll see you on the water soon!

To view a copy of the 2023 Minnesota Boating Guide book visit the MN DNR website. <https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/r/p/regulations/boatwater/boatingguide.pdf>

~Submitted by: Deputy Josh Arhart



# Trash Talk

## Beltrami County Solid Waste

### Household Battery Recycling and Disposal

Minnesota prohibits rechargeable batteries and products with non-removable rechargeable batteries from being disposed of in mixed municipal waste, this also includes Lithium and Lead Acid Batteries.

We do not accept batteries that are used for commercial applications, or batteries that come from a business. These can be brought to a retail store that accepts them or the business can use Call2Recycle.com to recycle their own batteries.

What is the problem?

Each year over two billion household batteries are purchased in the United States to power a variety of products. Some household batteries may contain toxic metals like mercury, lead, cadmium, and silver, which can contaminate our air and water when the batteries are incinerated or disposed of in a landfill. Eventually these metals can accumulate in living tissue and cause adverse health effects.

Lithium Battery Fires have become much too common in the Waste Industry. Between Beltrami County and Hubbard County we have some type of battery fire at least every 3 months, sometimes more often in the past couple of years. Beltrami County has been lucky because the fires have been isolated and have not been next to a large volume of fuel. These fires occur when batteries are not properly sorted and handled and become damaged, which alters the chemistry of the battery which makes it ignite.

Once a battery is used up or no longer useful, the battery's chemistry will determine how best to dispose of it. Look on the battery's label or packaging to identify what it is made of, then use this guide to identify the safe disposal method.

Step 1: Collect and sort your batteries by Type

Batteries that must be Recycled: Rechargeable Batteries, Lithium, and Lead Acid

\*\*\*Alkaline batteries are safe to place in the trash.

Step 2: Tape all battery terminals with clear tape/or place each battery in a clear plastic bag

Step 3: Find a Battery Recycler: Electric Vehicle (EV) batteries bring back to dealership, Large Rechargeable (40Volts) or more please bring back to the retailer. All others you can check with a local retail store (you may want to call first) or the Solid Waste Department will accept household batteries at one of the Beltrami County Transfer Stations or Remote Transfer Sites and place the battery in the battery recycle container located at each site.

For more information please check out our internet site: <http://www.co.beltrami.mn.us/Departments/Solid%20Waste/Solid%20Waste.html>

Or MPCA [www.pca.state.mn.us/hhw](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/hhw) Or Call2Recycle [www.call2recycle.com](http://www.call2recycle.com)

*~Submitted by: Solid Waste Division Director, Brian Olson*



Commissioners can be contacted by phone or e-mail:

**District 1 Commissioner Craig Gaasvig**

218-766-9699

[cgaasvig@paulbunyan.net](mailto:cgaasvig@paulbunyan.net)

**District 2 Commissioner Joe Gould**

218-259-4342

[Joe.gould@co.beltrami.mn.us](mailto:Joe.gould@co.beltrami.mn.us)

**District 3 Commissioner Richard Anderson**

218-467-3275

[richard@paulbunyan.net](mailto:richard@paulbunyan.net)

**District 4 Commissioner Tim Sumner**

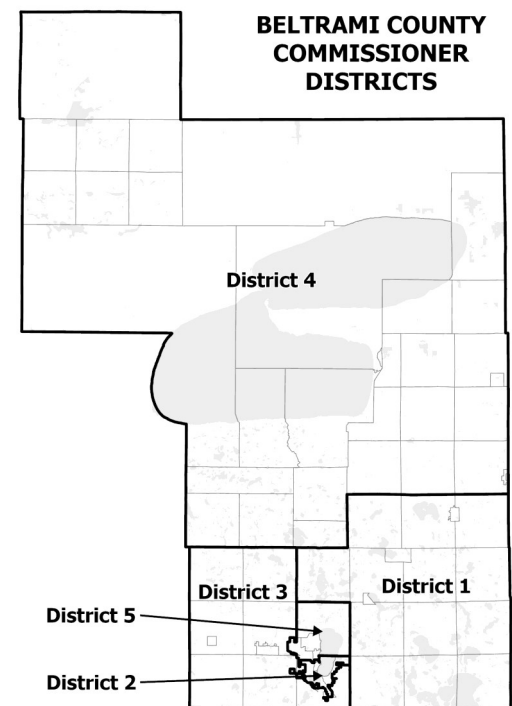
218-407-7589

[tsumner15@gmail.com](mailto:tsumner15@gmail.com)

**District 5 Commissioner John Carlson**

218-766-5010

[John.carlson@co.beltrami.mn.us](mailto: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)*

## Chronic Wasting Disease Update

Two years ago, in April 2021, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was confirmed at a Beltrami County deer farm. Following confirmation, a number of remains were discovered on tax-forfeited land in Beltrami County. The land was immediately surveyed by both the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and scientists from the Minnesota Center for Prion Research and Outreach (MNPRO) for remains that could pose a risk for CWD transmission to wild deer in the area. Testing of the bones collected at the site confirmed the presence of prions that exist in deer infected with CWD. Prions are abnormal proteins located within an infected animal.

On June 1, 2021, the Beltrami County Board formally approved the DNR request to build and maintain an enclosure fence on the tax-forfeited land to keep wild deer from entering the 12-acre contaminated area. The fence was completed in August 2021 and will remain in place for 20 to 25 years.

On August 3, 2021, a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between Beltrami County, MN DNR, and the MN Board of Animal Health was approved by the Beltrami County Board. The JPA addresses the responsibilities, obligations, and financial matters during the length of time the fence will occupy tax-forfeited land.

CWD is a fatal neurological disease that affects white-tailed deer. CWD remains rare in Minnesota but is a concern as there is no known cure. Currently there is no evidence the CWD poses a risk to humans, however, public health officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that hunters do not consume meat from animals known to be infected. Please see the DNR's website for more information: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/cwd/index.html>

Currently, MNPRO and the MN DNR are monitoring and performing ongoing research within the enclosure and, along with Beltrami County, are committed to limiting the spread of CWD in wild deer and keeping Minnesota's wild deer herd healthy.

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

# 2023 Road Construction Projects

Summer brings road construction and for Beltrami County we have the following road improvements projects planned:

- CSAH 20, Birchmont Beach Rd, from State Park entrance to CSAH 27, complete reconstruction
- CSAH 57, Sandpiper Rd, Bittern Rd, Island View Dr, from Sumac Rd to CSAH 21 at Turtle River, complete reconstruction with gravel surfacing
- CSAH 15, Irvine Ave, from 30<sup>th</sup> St to Anne St, complete reconstruction and a roundabout
- CSAH 15, Irvine Ave, from Turtle River crossing to CSAH 26, bituminous mill and overlay
- CSAH 15, Irvine Ave, from CSAH 26 to CSAH 32, bituminous resurfacing

The following safety projects are planned for this year:

- Install left and right turn lanes at the intersection of CSAH 21 and CSAH 59, Bemidji Rd and Glidden Rd
- Install left and right turn lanes at the intersection of CSAH 21 and CSAH 57, Bemidji Rd and Island View Dr

48 miles of chip seals are planned on the following routes:

- CSAH 5, Centerline Rd and Debs Rd, from US 2 to CSAH 32
- CSAH 12, Power Dam Rd, from Lake Ave to CSAH 39
- CSAH 22, Grange Rd, from West Co. line to CSAH 15

In addition to the construction projects we will have many maintenance projects happening too. One of the larger ones is drainage improvements along CR 507, Northwood Rd.

Remember to drive safely through work zones. Slow down and pay attention. Please contact the Beltrami County Highway at 218-333-8173 or stop in to see us if you ever have questions or concerns.

~Submitted by: Highway Engineer, Bruce Hasbargen



## As the Beacon Rotates

The Bemidji Regional Airport Authority manages the Bemidji Regional Airport through a joint powers agreement between Beltrami County and the City of Bemidji. The Board consists of two Beltrami County Commissioners (Craig Gaasvig and John Carlson), two City of Bemidji Council persons (Ron Johnson and Lynn Eaton) and one lay member from the community jointly appointed by the County and City (John Knorr). The Bemidji Regional Airport is the fourth busiest commercial service airport in Minnesota and, as of 2019, had an economic impact to our region of \$57.7 million and supports area employment of 459 jobs.

The 2023 construction season is going to be a very busy one at the airport. Starting with the Runway 13/31 Rehabilitation project. The project will remove the top two inches of bituminous pavement and replace it with four inches of bituminous, strengthening the pavement and extending its useful life at least another ten years. Construction is scheduled to begin July 10th and be completed by September 22 and the airport will be closed in late July to early August to accommodate this construction. The project will be funded with a FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) discretionary grant, Mn/DOT Aeronautics grant and Authority funds.

The Authority and its engineering consultant, Karvakko, are working with the City, Greater Bemidji and DEED to secure funding for a project that will provide several shovel-ready sites for aviation-related businesses to construct hangars. Planning Area #3 project on the west side of the airport will provide a new taxi lane, shovel-ready building sites, roads and utility infrastructure (including looping the City's water main around the north side of the airport) to support the aviation-related businesses that will build there. This project will be funded with a FAA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) grant as well as funds from DEED, the City and the Authority.

Other BIL funded projects being considered are a multi-use Snow Removal Equipment (SRE), aircraft deicing truck, a self-fueling system for aircraft and additional T Hangars.

Finally, Airport Zoning is on the minds of the Authority as well as many others in the community. Every airport in Minnesota must have an airport zoning plan that is approved by Mn/DOT Aeronautics. The process of reworking current airport zoning is being undertaken by the Joint Area Zoning Board (JAZB). The JAZB is made up of members from the Authority, Beltrami County, City of Bemidji, the Joint Planning Board, Grant Valley Township, Bemidji Township, Eckles Township, Mn/DOT Aeronautics, Karvakko and RS&H. The JAZB's mission is to develop airport zoning that will ensure airport safety but also consider economic development to work toward there being no need for variances, which ultimately erode the purpose of and effectiveness of airport zoning. Concepts being considered are restricting vulnerable populations (daycares, schools, adult care homes, hospitals) from intruding into the zones closest to the runway ends, establishing minimum lot sizes in certain zones and establish allowable uses and height restrictions within each zone. Mn/DOT Aeronautics will give a preliminary review of the airport zoning that the JAZB establishes and then it will be presented to the governmental entities for endorsement. Public meetings will be held and property owners will be notified if their property will be affected by the new airport zoning. A final version of airport zoning will be put together and submitted to Mn/DOT Aeronautics for its approval.

~Submitted by: Bemidji Regional Airport Executive Director, Karen Weller



Ottertail Power Company representative Brandon Johnson presents the Beltrami County Board of Commissioners and County Administrator Tom Barry with a \$65,067 rebate check for a recently completed campus wide lighting upgrade project.



County Adopt a Highway volunteers. For more information on this volunteer program, visit the Highway Department page on the Beltrami County Website

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

# Control of Spotted Knapweed

Per the Minnesota Noxious Weed Law, the Beltrami County Natural Resource Management (NRM) Department is responsible for the control of noxious weeds on 147,500 acres of tax-forfeited land. Plants are listed as noxious weeds because they can harm people, animals, and nature.

One of the most widespread noxious weeds in Beltrami County is spotted knapweed. Spotted knapweed can severely decrease the biological diversity of native habitats by reducing available forage for livestock and degrading wild-life habitats.

Spotted knapweed prefers dry, sandy soils and is found most often in fields, pastures, and roadsides. It grows 2-4 feet tall with gray-green foliage and has small pink flowers at the end of its stems. It also produces a chemical that is toxic to other plants, allowing it to spread quickly and become established.

A sound control plan takes several years to achieve satisfactory results, especially on older stands that have an established seed bank. There are a few methods used to control spotted knapweed. One is mechanical control, the repeated mowing before the plants flower to reduce seed production. Another is chemical control, using herbicides, and follow-up applications are necessary. Biological control is another option for large infestations. This method uses insects that feed specifically on the knapweed plant. Complete eradication using any or all of these methods is difficult.

The NRM Department chooses to use biological control because of its cost effectiveness and ease. There are two types of insects that feed on knapweed, the seed head weevil and the root-boring weevil. The seed head weevil is currently found in almost all knapweed infestations, so we supplement these with the root-boring weevil to attack the plants on two fronts. The cost is about \$150 for a release of 105 weevils. These weevils must be released in July, August, and September at one location. By releasing the weevils in close proximity to each other, they can more easily reproduce and self-perpetuate.

*~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 Division  
 Director—Curt Anderson.....218-333-2242  
 Public Health - Director Amy Bowles.... 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

# Exciting work in County Parks!



- Hand pump well installation began in 2022. The County received money from the federal American Rescue Plan grant to drill five wells - one at Movil Maze Recreation Area, three at Three Island Park, and one at Rognlien Park. These wells meet a great need at our parks by ultimately providing drinking water for park users, a place to wash hands after using the restrooms or recreating, and water for cleaning and maintaining park facilities quicker and more efficiently. The first two wells were drilled in July and August of 2022 at Movil Maze and the shelter at Three Island Park. The remaining three wells will be drilled this year.
- At Three Island Park, the main entrance road was reworked and widened up to the boat launch. The frost boils were significantly diminished and the road remains passible in the spring.
- The gold trail, on the north side of the Turtle River, was widened last fall to better accommodate multi-use winter use. The Bemidji Area Cross Country Ski Club maintains and grooms the ski trails through the MN DNR Grant-In-Aid program.

- We will be working on the vault at the shelter area of Three Island Park. The vault (underground tank) needs replacement and will occur this summer. During this time, the shelter bathroom will be closed. There is a bathroom less than a half mile away at the north parking lot.
- Mississippi High Banks primitive campsite is being adopted by the group "The River Runs Through Us - Bemidji". They will help clean up the river and help with improvements to the campsite. Plans are in the works to install a picnic bench and hopefully a bathroom structure this year.

*~Submitted by: Recreation Resource Manager, Lori Clark*