



News and Highlights

1st Quarter 2024

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 Replacement Project Update

Progress on the Beltrami County Jail replacement has seen significant advancement over the last several months. On December 22, 2023, Beltrami County closed on the Crown Property located at the intersection of Pioneer Street and Railroad St on the north side of the Bemidji Industrial Park. The County acquired the property through a generous donation after completing the appropriate land assessments to ensure the property was suitable for construction of the new Adult Corrections Center.

The Steering Committee and Sub-committees have been diligently meeting and working to ensure the project can efficiently and prudently move forward as quickly as possible.

The **Design and Operations Subcommittee** continues to work with designers and engineers to ensure the facility is efficient and meet the future needs of the County while enhancing safety for inmates and staff. The Finance Committee has been calculating construction and inflationary costs. Each month the project is behind schedule could cost the County an additional \$366,667. The County continues to house inmates in other counties, at an expense of well over \$1 Million a year.

The **Finance Subcommittee** has been working with a consulting and financial advisor to evaluate funding options. A construction project of this magnitude comes with a significant price tag and will need a cash infusion to finance construction. On January 6, 2024, the Board was given a presentation by the financial advisor and opted to follow the recommendation of the finance committee. Beltrami County will issue two bonds in the amount of \$40 Million to fund the \$80 Million project. Revenue from the Local Option Sales Tax will be the primary source of funding for repayment.

The **Programming Subcommittee** is working to ensure that program spaces in the new facility are prioritized, as this is an important element to ensure Beltrami County's award-winning programs have adequate space to provide services to inmates. Programming in the existing jail has limitations due to the lack of space to provide services. Many of these programs are centered around reducing recidivism and accommodating spiritual, religious and cultural activities. Expanded and enhanced programming is a substantial consideration for the new facility.

There was some interest in having a ceremonial sweat lodge on the new campus. No other county jail in Minnesota operates a sweat lodge, but some prisons do. Several members of the committees toured the Moose Lake Prison to see how they operate their sweat lodge. Efforts were made to incorporate a sweat lodge at the new jail, but ultimately after finishing their due diligence, it was determined that a sweat lodge wasn't practical. Aside from space, security and the ability to have appropriate personnel to perform the ceremonies were limiting factors. Also, jails differ from prisons where the inmate's stay is significantly shorter.



Thank you to the many citizens, staff and Board members who have contributed their time, efforts and expertise to this needed project. Ground-breaking is expected late summer or early fall 2024.

~Submitted by:
Public Information
Officer, Chris Muller

Supporting the Mission:

Making a Difference at the Bemidji Veterans Home

At the Bemidji Veterans Home, volunteers will be indispensable in enriching the lives of our residents. Their dedication, time, and empathy will provide invaluable support and companionship, enhancing the quality of life for those who served our nation. We also recognize the profound impact of family, friends, and community members who generously donate their time and resources to support our veterans.

If you or someone you know is passionate about making a difference, we invite you to contact Maryhelen Chadwick, the Public Affairs and Volunteer Coordinator at the Bemidji Veterans Home, at 218-364-8908 or Maryhelen.chadwick@state.mn.us. Maryhelen can provide information on how you can get involved and contribute to our mission of serving and honoring our veterans.

For those considering making a monetary donation to the Bemidji Veterans Home, it's essential to understand how your generosity directly impacts our residents. The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs maintains a structured donation process, ensuring transparency and accountability in the allocation of funds. Donations are divided into three key areas: general support, recreational activities, and holiday festivities.

The general fund provides flexibility to address various needs, from essentials like shoes for needy residents to equipment for our Physical Therapy gym. Recreation funds support both internal and external activities, offering opportunities for entertainment and outings like boating or attending hockey games. Holiday funds are dedicated to special celebrations and activities, fostering a sense of community and joy among our residents.

It's essential to note that regardless of their allocation, all donations ultimately benefit our veterans, enhancing their overall quality of life and providing opportunities for recreation and camaraderie.

By making a general donation, you ensure that your contribution has a broader and lasting impact on our residents' well-being. Your generosity is deeply appreciated and vital in fulfilling our commitment to serving and honoring our veterans. Please know that all donations go directly to supporting veterans and cannot be used for staff or operational expenses.

If you have any questions or would like to donate, please contact Maryhelen Chadwick. You also may give online at <https://mn.gov/mdva/homes/bemidji/>. Your support is invaluable, and together, we can continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who have served our nation.

~Submitted by: Veterans Services Officer, Shane Gustafson



2024 Tree Program

The Beltrami Soil and Water Conservation District holds a tree and plant sale each year to encourage the planting of native vegetation. We start taking orders in the fall, and distribute orders in the spring. The trees are sold as seedlings or young transplants in bundles of 25.

New additions to the program this year include some innovative ways to protect pines over the winter from pesky deer. White pine are a favorite winter snack for deer, so protecting the trees to maturity can be a challenge. To relieve some of the pressures, we are now carrying Browse Blockers, which make it nearly impossible for deer to destroy the terminal bud of a tree.

The sale is well underway by now, and the availability of some species has become limited. If you are interested in purchasing trees, plants, or any other accessories, you can find our order form on the County website or stop by our office.



Upcoming Opportunities for Cattle Producers

In the coming months, the Beltrami Soil and Water Conservation District will have some expanded opportunities to assist cattle producers.

To provide a bit of background, most of the SWCD's funding is sourced by grants. In the past, the focus has been primarily on protecting our resources in the areas of stormwater, forestry, and lakeshores.

Fortunately, due to a number of new grants, the SWCD's reach will be expanding into the world of pasture management. The SWCD could be able to help by designing and cost-sharing livestock watering systems and fencing to improve soil health and operation efficiency.

If you are interested in learning more about how the SWCD can help, stop by or call our office.

Aly Bergstrom, Conservation Technician
701 Minnesota Ave NW, Suite 113
Bemidji, MN 56601 218-333-4141

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

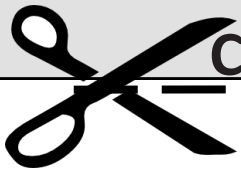
OR e-mail to: webmaster@co.beltrami.mn.us

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

Volunteer Program Opportunities!

Adopt-A-Critter-Crossing

Maybe it was because everyone spent more time at home during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, or maybe it was a timely bike ride along a county road during the turtle crossing season. Whatever the connection, the summer of 2020 motivated a group of Beltrami County citizens to raise more awareness, and ultimately take action for the critters who attempt to cross our roads. The Beltrami County Highway Department, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Bemidji State University (BSU), and several concerned citizens united to help find a way to decrease the mortality of critters crossing the roadways.

The group's goal was to find a way to encourage motorists to pay more attention and slow down during certain times of the year when small animals are commonly crossing our roadways. To help increase awareness, it was decided to use a foldable warning sign that could be opened during times when critters were more actively crossing and closed or folded down when they are not. This targeted and timely signing initiative also helps to prevent "sign blindness" where signs quickly become invisible or ignored after a period. Multiple BSU students assisted in this group effort; designing the sign, the sign locking mechanism, the tool to fold and unfold the sign, drafting brochures and informational sheets, and working to find ideal locations to install the signs. 10 locations believed to have the greatest positive impact have been selected and signs are being installed.

We are now looking for individuals or groups to adopt a critter crossing. Volunteer duties will include opening the sign at the beginning of the crossing season and closing it at the end of the season. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the County Highway Department at (218) 333-8173 or stop in at 2491 Adams Ave. NW, Bemidji.

*~Submitted by:
Highway Engineer, Bruce Hasbargen*



Adopt-A-Highway

The Beltrami County Highway department would like to thank the approximately 50 community groups, churches, individuals and businesses that volunteer each year to make the County Adopt A Highway program possible. The program has been in place since 2008 and has helped improve the appearance of our County roads.

The Adopt A Highway program is made up of volunteers who agree to pick up litter along an approximate two-mile segment of a County road, at a minimum of two times per year. Garbage bags, safety vests and safety information are supplied by the County Highway Department. The volunteers are recognized with a sign that displays the name of their group that is placed on both ends of their road section

If you have been looking for a way to help our environment or want to help keep the area you love looking good, please consider the Adopt A Highway program. To adopt a section of County road, contact the Beltrami County Highway Department at 218-333-8173 or stop in our office at 2491 Adams Ave NW in Bemidji.

~Submitted by: Highway Engineer, Bruce Hasbargen



The UPS Crew

VOLUNTEER



2024 Elections		
March 5th	Presidential Nomination Primary	Party Nominations for President
March 12th	Township Officer Elections	Township Supervisors, Clerk and/or Treasurer
August 13th	State Primary Election	State & Local races needing a Primary
November 5th	State General Election	Federal, State & local races, including President

Sample Ballot

Your official ballot will have the names of all candidates for your precinct.

To see a list of the names of candidates and questions that will be on the ballot for your precinct visit:
mnvotes.gov/myballot

To see a sample ballot for each precinct in Beltrami County visit:
co.beltrami.mn.us

To request a free copy of your sample ballot by email:
elections@co.beltrami.mn.us

Voter Registration

Online:
mnvotes.sos.mn.gov/voterstatuscheck

In Person:
 Auditor-Treasurer's Office
 Your Election Day Precinct

Absentee/Early Voting

Absentee/Early Voting Starts:
 46 Days before the Election

Vote In person:
 Beltrami Auditor-Treasurer's Office
 701 Minnesota Ave NW
 Monday-Friday
 8:00-4:30

Request an Absentee Ballot:
 Online:
mnvotes.sos.mn.gov/abrequest
 Email:
elections@co.beltrami.mn.us
 Phone:
 218-333-8448

Find Your Polling Place at: mnvotes.gov/pollfinder																																																																																												
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Medical Assistance (MA) Renewals

After a long pause due to the Public Health Emergency, Minnesota recipients of Medical Assistance (MA) began receiving MA Renewal notices and forms beginning in April of 2023 for Renewals that started in July of 2023. As of early February, Minnesota has processed over 1,100,000 MA renewals or approximately 77% of all Minnesota MA recipients. Out of those renewals, approximately 75% have kept their MA eligibility.

One of the keys to retaining MA eligibility is ensuring you update your contact information with Beltrami County so that you receive your notices and renewal forms. If you don't know your renewal date, you can look up when your MA renewal is due at the following DHS website: <https://www.mnrenewallookup.com/>. You will have to provide two of the three required fields to confirm your identity; Case Number, Member Number, and/or last four digits of your Social Security Number.

Some households can be automatically renewed and updates to the state system have been made so that a higher percentage of individuals are automatically renewed. If we can automatically renew your MA, we will send you a notice. We ask that you review the notice to make sure all the information about you and your family is correct. You do not have to do anything else, unless you have a change or correction to report. In January, 30% of cases were automatically renewed across Minnesota. Looking towards cases that are due for renewal in April, the state is expecting approximately 50% will be automatically renewed.

If we cannot automatically renew your MA, we will mail a renewal form to you. If you do not receive this within the next 6-8 weeks, contact your county or tribal agency. Without your completed renewal form, your coverage will end.

If you have not received your MA Renewal forms and you should have, please reach out to Beltrami County at 218-333-8300 and choose option 2 or 8. Please inform agency staff of your mailing address, contact info, and request to have a MA Renewal form mailed to you. You can also talk to a Community Resource Connections Navigator at 218-333-0880 who can assist you to complete and submit your Health Insurance Renewal or application as well.

For more information please see to MN Department of Human Services website at <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/adults/health-care/health-care-programs/programs-and-services/renewal-reporting-changes.jsp>

~Submitted by: Economic Assistance Division Director, Curtis Anderson



Women, Infants, and Children Program WIC 50th Anniversary

In 2024 we will focus on strategic planning, the Beltrami County Community Health Assessment (CHA), Beltrami County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), and assessing how our new base funding can support services to fill

served and the Public Health staff. The remodel is expected to be complete in March 2024. The remodel will improve the flow and space of clinic services, provide a designated lactation room, and a community room. The community room is multi-purpose and will support education classes, hands-on cooking classes, children services, and supervised visits.

Community Partnerships

Since September, Public Health has been working hard to build community partnerships and bring services and support to the people we serve. In January Public Health was selected to be Distribution Site for the Diaper Bank of Minnesota in Greater Minnesota. Public health, in partnership with other community agencies, will help ensure diapers are available and distributed. Sizes available will range from newborn to 5T pull ups.

If you would like to share your agency gaps and talk about the possibility of a partnership, please reach out and let us know how we can best serve you and your organization.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve our county.

~Submitted by: Public Health Division Director and Community Health Board Administrator, Amy Bowles

Public Health needs and fill gaps in our county. Why does WIC matter? For 50 years, WIC has helped support healthy families through nutrition education, health screenings, breastfeeding support, and access to healthy foods. Join us in celebrating 50 years of WIC. [WIC 50th Anniversary \(nwica.org\)](http://nwica.org)

Opioid Settlement Funds

Did you know that the Beltrami County Opioid Steering Committee in collaboration with the Beltrami County Board of Commissioners released an application to request funding? You can find the application on the County Website Home | Beltrami County. Awardees of the Opioid Settlement dollars are expected to be notified by April 22. The committee plans to release an application every January, pending funding availability.

Remodel

The Public Health Clinic (previously called the Family Health Clinic) is currently undergoing a remodel project that will improve the space utilized by both the clients

Explore New Sparks in Beltrami County 4-H

What is a spark? A spark is that excited feeling you get when you try something new. It's the beginning of a new passion or hobby. 4-H is full of opportunities to find your spark. Whether it's gardening, dog training, air rifle, engineering, or art; we have local, regional, and statewide opportunities to guide you through a variety of projects that interest you!

Becoming a 4-H'er is quick and easy! Online enrollment streamlines the process, and we can get you started with a community club that suits your calendar and interests. Our clubs do an excellent job of providing hands-on learning activities during their meetings. You will also have access to a wide range of online and in-person project development opportunities that we share on our website, social media, and a weekly newsletter.

4-H is an investment in your family. As a leading youth development organization, we strive to provide high quality programs for youth grades kindergarten through one year past high school. Monthly club meetings are the foundation of your 4-H experience in Beltrami County. Any other opportunities you decide to participate in will cultivate a unique experience for you and your family! Contact Frankie Mord, Beltrami County 4-H Extension Educator today to find out how 4-H can serve your family at 218-444-5722 or flatimer@umn.edu. Enroll in 4-H today at v2.4honline.com.



Natural Resource Management

2023 Apportionment

The Beltrami County Natural Resource Management (NRM) Department responsibly manages approximately 147,500 acres of State-in-Trust (tax-forfeited) land in a sustainable manner. These lands are held in-trust for the local taxing districts and the NRM Department generates revenues through timber permits, land sales, easements, and miscellaneous permits.

In 2023, the NRM Department generated revenues of \$1,622,000 and, after expenses, produced a net revenue of \$871,850. Per MN State Statute 282.08, these net revenues (profits) are distributed to Beltrami County, townships/cities, and local school districts.

For each \$100 of net revenue, \$30.00 is directed toward the county economic development fund and the reforestation fund. The county park fund receives \$20.00 out of each \$100 in net revenue. The County general fund receives \$20.00, the townships/cities where the revenue generating activity occurs receive \$10.00, and the school district where the revenue is generated receives \$20.00.

The NRM Department's timber development activities account received \$195,993 to be used for reforestation efforts and the County Development fund received \$65,331. These development monies are used to fund private business projects that promote tourism, agriculture, and industrial development in the county. The County Parks fund received \$174,155 and the townships/cities received \$87,077 to be utilized at their discretion.

The County General Fund and the local school districts - each received \$174,155. The Bemidji ISD#31 received \$141,194, Blackduck ISD#32 received \$23,087, and Kelliher ISD#36 received \$9,873.

The 2023 apportionment monies were distributed in February of 2024. It's great that the monies generated on tax-forfeited lands are used locally and help toward the betterment of Beltrami County.

~Submitted by: Natural Resource Management Director, Richard Moore

Beltrami County Parks

The start of 2024 has been unique to say the least. At the writing of this article (yes...in late January), we barely have any snow on the ground and it's fading fast! This has made for an almost non-existent ski and snowmobile season this winter. With spring on the horizon, maybe a little earlier than expected, let's look at what we accomplished last year and what we are looking forward to this year.

What happened in 2023?

- The hand pump well project was completed! These wells have been a great addition to all our parks and a year-round water source makes it even better.
- We replaced a cracked vault under the restroom building at Three Island Park shelter area. With years of freezing and thawing temperatures, the concrete could no longer stand up to the conditions. The vault was replaced and insulated to prevent this from happening in the future.
- The George W. Neilson Foundation awarded a grant to help with upgrades to the mountain bike system at Movil Maze. In 2023, the challenge area was partially reworked, and a picnic table was added nearby.



What's in store for 2024?

- With the Neilson Foundation grant, the last project associated with this grant is to install a bike work-station near the shelter at Movil Maze.
- We received funding to repair erosion at the Mississippi High Banks campsite. Over many years, the sandy bank has become unstable and eroded into the river. A set of stairs, bank stabilization, and vegetation will be placed to restore the bank.
- In 2023, we were awarded an American Rescue Plan grant to replace the aging restroom infrastructure. After the recent failure of one vault, it was important to look at our other vaults. With the grant, we will be able to replace the three remaining wooden restrooms buildings with new concrete systems. Installation of new single stalled restrooms will be at Movil Maze and the north and south trailhead at Three Island Park either this year or in 2025.



~Submitted by: Parks & Recreation Manager, Lori Clark

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

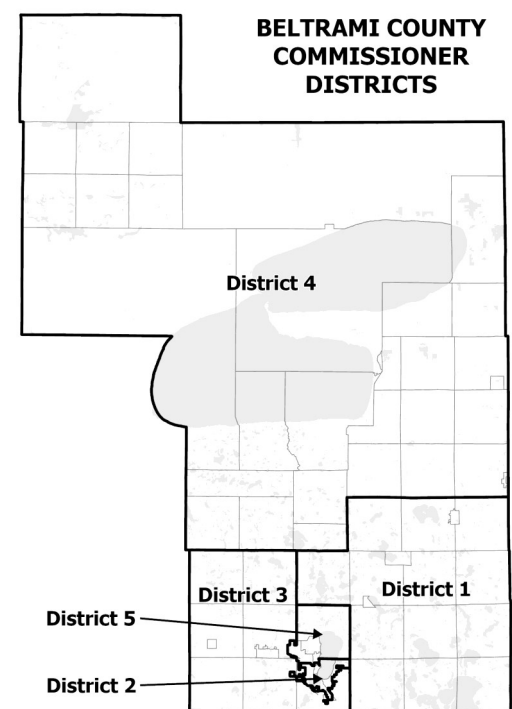
218-407-7589

timsunmer15@gmail.com

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

Future Dog Trainers Wanted!

No bones about it, 4-H is the place for youth(K-13) to learn how to work with their dogs! The Beltrami County 4-H program has a host of experienced dog training mentors who work diligently each year to teach youth and their pups the following skills: leash control, verbal commands, knowledge around dog care and breeds, and how to have a working relationship with their dog.

Youth and their canine partners attend weekly classes April through September to develop their skills.

Interested families must attend the Dog Project Registration Meeting Thursday, April 4th at 6pm at the Beltrami County Fairgrounds in the 4-H Food Booth.

Enroll today at v2.4honline.com. For more information, please contact the Beltrami County 4-H Dog Project Leader Lori Brama at 218-760-6511.

Beltrami County Solid Waste

NW Regional 9 County HUB & Spoke Project

This \$84M project in Northwest MN is a comprehensive, one-of-a-kind project on a scale (9 Counties) and of a scope (multiple waste, recyclable, compostable and reusable material diversion activities) that is unprecedented. The results of this system are numerous. It eliminates 12 unlined Landfills for demolition debris and replaces them with 2 lined landfills (HUBS) servicing a geographic area >12% of the State (an 83% reduction in Landfills). The closed unlined Landfills are converted to mixed-material collection sites (SPOKES) that manage not just demolition debris, but recyclables, reusable material and compostable – all of which better utilizes other existing infrastructure in the area, and increases access to those services for three (3) Tribal Nations (Leech Lake, Red Lake and White Earth) and multiple other Environmental Justice areas.

The 9 County Hub & Spoke Project seeks \$61.5M in State funds (Bond & General Fund Monies) to accomplish the project. The Hub & Spoke project is derived from an exhaustive study completed in the spring of 2023 which was funded by the MPCA and completed by the 9 Counties. However, it builds upon funds and projects previously sought, but not funded, in 2021 and 2022. The projects combined into our aggregated 9 County Project include:

<u>PROJECT</u>		<u>LOCAL</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>REQUEST MADE</u>
Polk / 6 County Regional Phase III	\$3M	\$3M	\$6M	HF/SF & MPCA CAP	
Cass Co Recycling Infrastructure		\$3.5M	\$3.5M	\$7M	CAP GRANT - MPCA
<u>9 Co Regional Hub & Spoke</u>		<u>\$16M</u>	<u>\$55M</u>	<u>\$71M</u>	<u>HF/SF PENDING - MMB</u>
TOTAL PROJECT		\$22.5	\$61.5	\$84M	

Major Components of Each Sub-Project

Polk / 6 Co Regional Phase III: Upgrade Bag Opener to make the Material Recovery Facility more efficient and effective. Install Robotics to capture more materials and remove barriers to program expansion by long-term employee shortages, convert SSOM Compost Facility from static windrow compost process to aerated static pile compost process to increase capacity on same footprint, and reduce fossil fuel/labor inputs.

Cass Co Recycling: Replace dilapidated buildings and equipment used for recycling with new, expanded sized building and equipment to manage larger volumes and more material types of recyclables. Also allow for additional waste diversion programs and activity options locally.

9 Co Regional Hub & Spoke: Replace 2 unlined Demo Landfills with 2 Lined Regional Demo Landfills (HUBS) and replace 10 unlined Demo Landfills with Mixed Material Collection Sites (SPOKES). Purchase equipment to divert materials received away from disposal to reuse, recycling or composting opportunities, and operate the new facilities. Expected materials are targeted for diversion from disposal for other uses: Clean wood to biochar, shingles to road construction, concrete/brick for roads, sheetrock to soil amendment, porcelain to subgrade amendments, and scrap metals for recycling. SPOKES will also expand local access to programs for Household Hazardous Waste, Electronics, Organics Composting, traditional recyclables, and special wastes such as tires, batteries, etc...

Featured Waste Diversion Activity: Wood Waste to Biochar

The 9 County Regional Hub & Spoke Project is able to take advantage of a unique opportunity only available in this area, but could become the 'blueprint' for others to follow and expand across the State of MN and the US. Diverting clean wood currently managed as a waste to be landfilled and instead processing it and converting it to a valuable material known as biochar. Biochar is a highly valuable soil amendment which sequesters carbon and increases soil fertility and water holding capacity. Biochar production is currently limited, and the technology just emerging. However, the only Biochar facility currently in operation in Minnesota is North Star Lime, Inc. located in Crookston, MN. It is operational now, and scheduled to go into full-scale operation in May 2024.



North Star Lime is using a pyrolysis unit from ARTi. They are processing various carbon feedstocks through the system as they work the 'kinks' out of the system – issues such as moisture, ambient temperature changes, feed rates, various materials sizes, etc. Once the feedstock is processed, it is loaded into large white poly-coated tote bags – known as Super Sacs. Unique to our situation, Polk County is currently disposing of these types of Super Sacs which are now being diverted from the MSW waste stream and reused by North Star Lime. Yet another example of a spin-off of this initiative.

North Star Lime and the 9 County Hub & Spoke are uniquely positioned to fulfill each entity's needs in a way which would be a template for replication around the State. North Star Lime's greatest need is a carbon feedstock – clean wood. In our Hub & Spoke system, clean dimensional lumber is currently landfilled as a waste. The Hub & Spoke proposal would construct the infrastructure to divert this waste out of the Landfill's waste stream from an area covering 12% of the State, process it into smaller size for efficient transportation to the biochar facility, sized to require maximum biochar reactor efficiency, and yield the highest quality product sought around the State. North Star Lime also strongly desires use of the Polk SSOM Compost to activate the biochar and add further value to the biochar product.



The mix of the Hub & Spoke infrastructure, the SSOM Compost Facility infrastructure, and North Star Lime's infrastructure results in a true movement of materials up the preferred waste management hierarchy. It moves materials from wastes to resources and changes the paradigm of 'closing the loop' to 'linking the closed loops' which benefits the waste and recycling systems, composting systems, improves soil health and fertility, and reduces greenhouse gasses and sequesters carbon at each step in the process.

In short: if the MN Legislature appropriates the \$61.5M in funds requested for the 9 County Regional Hub & Spoke Project in 2024, a roadmap to creating an entirely new waste management system for all other areas of the State to replicate will be created.

~Submitted by: Solid Waste Division Director, Brian Olson

Severe Weather Season and Outdoor Warning Sirens

The winter season for 2023-2024 has been anything but normal with record warmth, rainfall, and lack of snow-fall. It is far too early to speculate what that means for spring and summer, but one thing is certain, Minnesota's severe weather season is looming. To prepare Minnesotans, Emergency Management Agencies partner with the National Weather Service for Severe Weather Awareness Week. April 8-12, 2024 will have daily hazard topics to provide education and safety recommendations.

It is important to know what advisories, watches, and warnings mean. Advisories are issued for impactful weather that don't quite meet warning criteria. A watch indicates that severe weather, floods, or tornadoes are possible, but not occurring. Warnings are issued when there is an imminent threat from flooding, damaging winds, or tornadoes. Every corner of Minnesota is impacted by hail, destructive winds, flooding, and tornadoes. Know where shelters are located and how to receive warnings. Flooding kills more people than any other weather event, most people are killed driving cars in flooded roadways. Excessive heat can also be dangerous, never leave children or pets in cars unattended. Cars are like greenhouses and can warm to deadly temperatures in minutes.

Minnesota's tornado drill day is set for Thursday, April 11, 2024. Two drills will be conducted, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. If severe weather is forecast, the drill will be postponed or cancelled. Outdoor warning sirens will be activated. In Beltrami County the following communities have sirens: Bemidji, Waskish, Blackduck, Kelliher, and the Lake Bemidji State Park. Sirens are intended to be heard outdoors and activated when destructive thunderstorms with winds over 75MPH are expected, tornado warnings or at the discretion of the Emergency Management Director.

Beltrami County residents are encouraged to enroll in the CodeRED Emergency Notification System on the Beltrami County website to receive important alerts. Visit the Beltrami County Emergency Management Facebook page during Severe Weather Awareness Week for additional information.

~Submitted by: Emergency Management Director: Chris Muller



Upper Red Lake Early Ice Vehicle Restrictions

The fall and early winter of 2023 was unlike any in recent past regarding ice making on Beltrami County lakes. The Beltrami County Sheriff's Office responds to reports of stranded ice fishermen on Upper Red Lake (URL) almost every fall, normally for a week or so after URL freezes, as ice is still shifting, until Lower Red Lake freezes. This year like many others, URL was one of the first lakes in the state that had "fishable ice", and sportsmen from across the region came to target the walleyes and crappies that have made the lake famous.

Without the prolonged cold temperatures that were needed to "lock up" the ice on Lower Red Lake, first responders were called to numerous calls of stranded fishermen throughout December, sometimes numerous times per day. On December 30th 2023, Sheriff Riggs imposed restrictions on vehicle traffic pursuant to MN Statute 86.B106. These restrictions barred all vehicle traffic on the lake with the exception of area outfitters and resorts whom were allowed the ability to make sure their customers and clients were safe.

Sheriff Riggs immediately identified a team to evaluate the safety of the ice and establish when the restrictions could be lifted. The team consisted of representatives from Beltrami County Sheriff's Office, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Red Lake Department of Natural Resources, Kelliher Fire and Rescue, and several area resorts and outfitters.

With some help from mother nature in the form of lower winds and colder temperatures, the restrictions were lifted on January 9th, 2024.

The Sheriff's Office would like to thank that resorts and outfitters that helped evaluate the ice and were understanding of the need for the restrictions, along with fisherman that abided by the restrictions and were patient with the process. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office would like to thank the first responders, outfitters, and community members that conducted the ice rescues and helped keep these emergency situations from being tragic.

~Submitted by: Sheriff Captain, Joe Kleszyk



www.co.beltrami.mn.us

Board of Commissioners

- District 1—Craig Gaasvig218-766-9699
- District 2—Joe Gould218-259-4342
- District 3—Richard Anderson218-467-3275
- District 4—Tim Sumner218-407-7589
- District 5—John Carlson218-766-5010

Administration Building

701 Minnesota Ave NW, Bemidji MN 56601

- Administrator—Thomas Barry 218- 333-4109
- Assessor—Joe Skerik218-333-4116
- Auditor/Treasurer—JoDee Treat.....218-333-4175
- Environmental Services—Brent Rud218-333-4158
- Facilities Manager—Steve Shadrick218-333-8475
- Geographic Info Systems (GIS).Kevin T. 218-333-8457
- Human Resources—Ann Schroeder218-333-4155
- License Center218-333-4148
- 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 Lind218-333-4196
- 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 Riggs218-333-9111
- 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 Olson218-333-8187

County Extension

7223 Fairgrounds Rd NW, Bemidji MN 56601

- Extension Secretary218-444-5722