



Do Not Push Snow Onto Public Roadways

A timely reminder from the Highway Department for all residents and snow removal operators: It is unlawful, under Minnesota Statute 160.2715, to deposit snow onto public roadways.

Piles of snow deposited onto public roadways may re-freeze and create a significant hazard to the traveling public and future snow removal operations. Other hazards created by improper placement of snow on or near a public roadway include drainage problems, drifting, sight obstruction and impaired safe accessibility.

Violations are considered a misdemeanor, and civil penalties also may apply if the placement of snow creates a hazard that contributes to a motor vehicle crash and or pedestrian injury. The civil liability can extend to both the property owner and the person who places the snow.

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“Lean, Focused” County Budget Will Offset 27% Decrease in State Aid with Budget/ Staff Cuts, Improved Interdepartmental Efficiencies

The county budget for 2011, approved by the Board of Commissioners on December 14, is lean and focused on core services, said Gary Weiers, Rice County administrator.

“We’re likely to receive significantly less program aid from the state this year than we did last year, but we’ve managed – through substantial operational budget reductions, reductions in staffing, and interdepartmental efficiencies – to actually decrease by .11% the levy needed to fund county operations.”

In fact, Weiers said, Rice County’s tax per person living in the county (its “per capita tax”) is likely to rank lowest among all Minnesota counties in 2011 – and to be the only one in the state to stay below the \$300 mark.

In 2010, Rice County received \$2,487,080 in state program aid, money that helps finance state-mandated services such as social service programs, public health, jails, and auditors’ and recorders’ operations. Given the fact that Minnesota has a projected deficit of \$6.2 billion, the county is not counting on receiving

the full amount the 2010 legislature certified for it. In fact, it is estimating that it will receive 27% less in program aid this year, or \$1.8 million. It has offset that loss of revenue through a number of belt-tightening measures, including:

- permanently reducing staff by 2 FTE (in addition to approximately 6 FTE in staff reductions in 2008–2010) and holding more positions open indefinitely, and
- effecting an across-the-board 2% budget reduction for all outside agencies (historical societies, libraries, senior centers, and soil and water conservation).

While the county court system’s budget is unchanged from last year, it will be contending with increased costs, due to state cuts and cost shifts. The levy intended for housing and redevelopment has been reduced, but the cost of debt service has risen, due to the \$15 million bond issued last year for infrastructure improvement (including \$13 million for improving Rice County highways).

[See County Budget, page 2](#)

County Welcomes Three New Department Heads

New leaders have taken the helm at three county departments: Information Technology, Public Health and the Sheriff’s Office. Economic times are making their tasks more challenging, but all are looking forward to working with the Board of Commissioners and other department heads to provide the best services possible.

Melissa Reeder, Director of Information Technology

One of her favorite parts of her job, says Melissa Reeder, is to enable others to use technology to make their job easier. “I love working with others and providing opportunities for them to grow professionally and personally.”

Reeder, who became the county’s director of information technology (IT) in September, is responsible for providing technology vision and leadership in the development of the overall county IT program, which serves over

350 users and supports more than 70 different applications. IT is always challenging, noted Reeder, because technology is always changing and develops at a rapid clip. “The trend in IT of late is to utilize centralized systems, such as sharing systems with another county or with state systems. This means that the speed of our network internally and externally (i.e., on the Internet) is becoming a critical component to our success as a county.”

A partial listing of projects that the IT team tackled last year suggests the range and importance of their responsibilities:

- Adding two new servers to the pool of shared servers to support the robust workload and create a redundant environment for many of the country’s most critical applications.
- Implementing an offsite storage system to support disaster recovery and redundancy for critical data.

[See New Department Leaders, page 3](#)

On the Web

Toward Zero Deaths on Our Roads

In 2009, highway deaths fell to their lowest number since 1950, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. There were 33,808 nationwide, a 9.7 percent decline from 2008. Minnesota accounted for 421 of those (down from 455 in 2008), including four that occurred in Rice County (down from 11 in 2008).

That is good news, but it's just the start, according to Toward Zero Deaths (TZD), which has set a goal of having no more than 400 highway deaths in the state in 2010. TZD is a partnership led by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Health.

Many people wrongly assume that traffic fatalities are an urban problem. Actually, 309 of the 421 deaths in Minnesota last year occurred in areas with populations of less than 10,000 and 296 took place on rural roadways. Increased use of seat belts, safer cars, and tougher enforcement of drunken driving laws has reduced fatalities overall, but challenges still remain. These include people driving at unsafe/illegal speeds (a factor in 25 percent of last year's fatal crashes) and distracted driving occasioned by sending or receiving text messages while at the wheel.

The Zero Deaths program was launched in 2003. Since then, Minnesota traffic deaths have dropped by 35 percent. For more information, visit the TZD web site at www.minnesotatzd.org

"Lean, Focused" County Budget

Continued from page 1

A contingency fund of \$300,000 will provide a buffer in the event of additional state cuts in aid, tax abatements or other unexpected expenses.

Potential Impacts

What will be the impact of all this? As noted, the county's "per capita tax" will remain under \$300 and is likely to be the lowest of Minnesota's 87 counties. The levy needed to support county services is lower than last year, but so is the county's "tax capacity" (the value of properties located here) due to declining market values. That means the "tax rate" (the county levy divided by tax capacity) will have to increase.

What will that mean in monetary terms? If you owned a house valued at \$150,000 in 2010 (and its value remains the same in 2011), your county tax will increase by \$34. The total (\$486) will be similar to the tax paid on properties of the same value in 2004 (\$499) and significantly less than the taxes paid in 2002 (\$579) and 2003 (\$591).

How much effect will cost-cutting measures have on services? As little as the county can make it, said Weiers. "We're learning how to 'work lean' and examining all our procedures with an eye to the end result for our customers. If 'the way we've always done it' costs more and doesn't benefit county residents, it'll change."

It would be unrealistic, however, to think that people will see no detrimental effects from these cost-saving measures. "Workloads are going to be increasing and you're probably going to have a longer wait for certain services. Outside agencies impacted by budget reductions may have to curtail some of their services as well."

The county will continue to look for ways to reduce costs, analyzing mandated and non-mandated services in each department and assessing their importance to citizens of Rice County, stated Weiers. Also under scrutiny will be some \$5.5 million in infrastructure needs that have been identified as potential bond items, including jail, county corrections, and Army Reserve Center improvements and telecommunications upgrades.

2010 County Per Capita Tax

County	Per Capita Tax	Rank	Rice Levy if same per capita
Rice	\$294.59	86	\$18,529,399
Dakota	\$322.16	85	\$20,263,219
Scott	\$428.29	73	\$26,938,584
LeSueur	\$464.73	67	\$29,230,587
Dodge	\$491.39	58	\$30,907,448
Steele	\$506.29	49	\$31,844,628
Waseca	\$534.60	45	\$33,625,270
Goodhue	\$564.71	35	\$35,519,129



Comparison of County Tax on \$150,000 Home

Year	Tax	Year	Tax
2002	\$579	2007	\$434
2003	\$591	2008	\$416
2004	\$499	2009	\$421
2005	\$481	2010	\$452
2006	\$452	2011	\$486



Conservation Tree Seedlings and Shrubs for Sale

The Rice Soil and Water Conservation District, 1810 NW 30th Street in Faribault, is once again taking orders for its annual tree sale. The district sells a wide variety of tree seedlings and shrubs (in bundles of 25 usually) to be used for conservation purposes only, such as windbreaks and wildlife plantings. The selection includes conifers (Black Hills Spruce and Norway Pine, among many others), deciduous trees (including basswood, black walnut, sugar maple and Princeton American

Elm, a true American elm that is resistant to Dutch Elm Disease), and shrubs (cranberry-bush, common purple lilac, hazelnut and others). Orders are taken on a first-come, first-served basis with trees arriving in April. For free help with a tree planting, call the district office at 507-332-5408 or visit www.riceswcd.org and download an order form.



Rice County Welcomes New Leaders in Three Departments

Continued from page 1

- Supporting the separation of the systems in the Law Enforcement Center when the Faribault Police Department moved to their new home.



- Improving climate control in the Data Center to keep equipment from overheating. (“Upgrading a room which is expected to be available 24/7 can be a scheduling challenge,” said Reeder.)

IT was also a key player in supporting Rice County staff and public volunteers during the September flooding. With IT’s updated GIS data, agencies were able to map flood damage and address the areas of need quickly.

What’s on the docket for 2011? “There will be considerable involvement with the Jail Annex project,” noted Reeder. “IT will support this endeavor with full connectivity back to the Law Enforcement Center for data systems, security and phones.

Reeder has a bachelor’s degree in speech communications and computer science from Minnesota State University, Mankato. In May, she will receive a master’s degree in management information systems from Metropolitan State University. Before coming to work for the county, she served as IT director for the City of Northfield, where she and her family reside.

Anna Haubrich, Director of Rice County Public Health

The Public Health Department is responsible for maintaining, protecting and promoting the health of the community of Rice County as a whole. This includes everything from providing information about smoking cessation and long-term care to administering childhood immunizations and flu shot clinics.

Anna Haubrich, who became the department’s director in August following the retirement of Mary Ho, takes those responsibilities very seriously. “I am proud to be a part of the work public health does,” says Haubrich, “and proud to be a part of the work nursing does.” A native of Hallock, Minnesota, she has a bachelor of science degree in nursing from the University of North Dakota and is writing her capstone project for a master’s degree

in transformational leadership at Augsburg College. She has been a public health nurse in Polk County and for Fargo/Cass Public Health. Before coming to Rice County, she was a public health supervisor for the Saint Paul-Ramsey County Department of Public Health.



As director, Haubrich says, it is her job to “make sure we use our revenue in the most effective way.” This includes directing efforts “to collaborate with community agencies, clinics, hospitals and other health care providers so we can work together for the health of our citizens and the community as a whole, and to seek and apply for funding sources so we have the resources to carry on the work necessary to accomplish the vision of the department.”

To do that effectively, she has to understand what is happening in public health at the state and federal levels, and to bring that information to the local level so the department can stay current and vital. What are some of the biggest public health challenges facing Rice County today? For one thing, says Haubrich, “We are in the midst of a population shift. The largest work force, the baby boomers, is beginning to retire. People with vast experience and knowledge are leaving the workforce, so we have to focus on developing the leaders of tomorrow. The ability to care for the baby boomers as they age is also going to be very challenging. There will be fewer people to work in those positions and more people who need assistance.”

Haubrich and her husband, Ross, have a son, two dogs and a cat. In her spare time, she enjoys painting, playing the ukulele and spending time with friends.

Troy Dunn, Rice County Sheriff

In November, Rice County voters elected Troy Dunn to succeed Richard Cook as Rice County Sheriff. Dunn has spent 21 of his 23 years in law enforcement in Rice County, serving as a correctional officer, patrol deputy, sergeant and, most recently, chief deputy. He has been a use-of-force instructor and has been on the ERU (SWAT) team for 15 years, the last five as deputy commander and commander. For

eight years he taught the DARE program in five schools in Rice and LeSueur counties, educating children about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.



Overall, Dunn said, he doesn’t expect to make many fundamental changes at the Sheriff’s Office. As chief deputy he was involved in implementing aspects of many current jail management procedures, including the policy of relocating people deemed too impaired to be jailed to detoxification centers where staff are trained to deal with withdrawal and addiction symptoms. Most counties throughout Minnesota, he noted, have established similar procedures because of the liability risks involved. “It is a matter of safety for our staff as well as our inmates.”

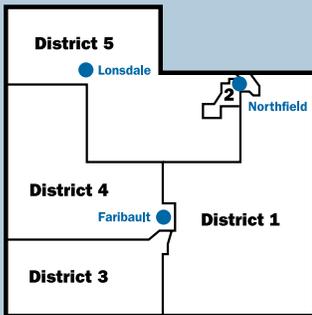
What other challenges does the county’s chief law enforcement officer expect to face? The Sheriff’s Office is in the process of establishing a new location for the Jail Annex at the old Army Reserve Center in Faribault. If funding becomes available, there would be room there to expand and house all inmates under one roof, better utilizing staff and services. Another major project is transitioning to the 800 MHz radio system being mandated by the FCC, which they hope to have up and running in Rice and Steele counties in late 2011 or early 2012. “We are finalizing the construction of tower sites and starting to purchase the equipment for officers. All public safety agencies need to upgrade their radio platforms by 2014. We have been fortunate to obtain grants to assist with this major task.”

Dunn hopes to maintain the current staffing levels for the Sheriff’s Office and provide proactive law enforcement services, such as the DARE program, and continuing aggressive enforcement and education through the Rice County Drug Task Force.

After graduating from high school, Dunn attended Alexandria Technical College for Law Enforcement. In 2008 he graduated from Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command, a program for officers intending to become police administrators.

Dunn lives in Faribault with his wife, Tara, son and dog. Outside of work, he likes to hunt, fish and travel with his family.

Contacts



Rice County Board of Commissioners (as of January 1, 2009)

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District 2

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District 3

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District 4

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District 5

Jeff Docken
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Phone Numbers

General Information 507-332-6100
Toll-Free Numbers (do not dial "1" or area code)
 From Northfield 645-9576
 From Lonsdale 744-5185

Rice County Standing Meetings

Board of Commissioners

Meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month as a Committee of the Whole/Work Session, 8:30 a.m., Commissioners' Room, Rice County Government Services Building.

Meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month as a Regular Board, 8:30 a.m., Commissioners' Room, Rice County Government Services Building.

Planning Commission

Meets the first Thursday of the month, 7:00 p.m., Commissioners' Room, Rice County Government Services Building.

Board of Adjustment

Meets the second Monday of the month; 7:00 p.m., Commissioners' Room, Rice County Government Services Building.

Community Corrections Advisory Board

Meets the third Thursday of even-numbered months (February, April, June, August, October, December), 3:30 p.m., Rice County Government Services Building.

Community Health Services

Citizens' Advisory Committee

Meets the fourth Wednesday every other month (January, March, May, July, September, November), 6:30–8:00 p.m.; call 507-332-6111 for location.

Emergency Medical Services Provider Council

Meets quarterly, 7:00–9:00 p.m.; call 507-332-6119 for meeting date and location.

Mental Health Advisory Council

Meets the fourth Wednesday of the month, 12:00 p.m. (noon), Friendship House, located at 212-B Central Avenue, Faribault.

Rice County Departments

Administrator

507-332-6101 Gary Weiers

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Assessor Paul Knutson
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Attorney

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Auditor/Treasurer

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Community Corrections Director James Haas

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Court Administrator

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Information Technology Director

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Parks/Facilities Director

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Public Health & CHS Director

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Recorder

507-332-6114 Marsha DeGroot

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Sheriff

507-332-6010 Troy Dunn

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Social Services Director

507-332-6115 Mark Shaw

mshaw@co.rice.mn.us

Veterans' Service Officer

507-332-6176 Tracy McBroom

trmcbbroom@co.rice.mn.us

Rice County Landfill, Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste Facilities

3800 145th Street E., Dundas, MN 55019
 507-332-6833
www.co.rice.mn.us/waste
rcsolidwaste@co.rice.mn.us

Hours of Operation

Monday–Friday:

7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Saturday:

April–October: 7:30–11:30 a.m.

(2nd and 4th Saturdays only)

November–March: 7:30–11:30 a.m.

(2nd Saturday only)

Household Hazardous Waste

The first rules about hazardous products are to avoid them if possible, or use them for their intended purposes. Improper use or disposal can be harmful to human health and the environment.

The following signal words on a container label usually mean it contains hazardous chemicals: **danger, caution, warning, poison, combustible, contains petroleum distillates, flammable, toxic, corrosive, contains acid, contains lye, causes burns to the skin, protect skin and eyes**, etc. Common examples include paint, thinners,

stains, varnish, paint removers, cleaners, pesticides, adhesives, old gasoline, etc.

Bring your household hazardous waste to our facility, located halfway between Northfield and Faribault, 1 mile to the east off State Highway 3 on 145th Street East. Free paint and other useable items are also available at the facility.

New for 2011 – Expanded Household Hazardous Waste Facility Hours

The Rice County Household Hazardous Waste Facility will now be open the same hours as the Landfill/Recycling Center.

2011 Calendar

Your single sort recycling will be picked up on a schedule set by your garbage hauler (bi-weekly or weekly). Call your garbage hauler if you are not sure of your week (blue or white, indicated below).

= Rice County Landfill, Recycling, Household Hazardous Waste Facilities are Closed

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On the Web

Landfill, Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste Facilities

Years ago, disposal of unwanted items was easy. Trash was set out and a garbage hauler took it away to a dump. Environmental problems of contaminated groundwater began when chemicals were deposited in the landfills. Disposal regulations have changed and modern landfills are now constructed to protect groundwater.

Our natural resources are limited and materials can be remanufactured into new products rather than used once and stored forever in a landfill. Now that recycling has become a way of life for most of us, we need to focus more on **reduction** of waste and **reuse** items so as to **stop waste before it starts!** Remember your three R's of waste prevention — **Reduce**, **Reuse** and then **Recycle** what's left.

Almost everything can be reused or recycled into new products. Some materials have limited or no markets or are too costly to disassemble for recycling. The Solid Waste Department is responsible for the efficient and environmentally sound disposal of solid waste for the county. For more information, visit our web site at www.co.rice.mn.us/waste

HOURS OF OPERATION:

Monday–Friday:

7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Saturday:

April–October:

7:30–11:30 a.m.

(2nd & 4th Saturdays only)

November–March:

7:30–11:30 a.m.

(2nd Saturday only)

www.co.rice.mn.us/waste

Waste Reduction and Recycling Problem Materials

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Waste reduction is considered to be the best method of waste management. It causes no harm to the environment, it costs nothing for a family to implement (in fact, it saves money), and it does not use up natural resources. Ideas for your family:

- Purchase equipment that is durable, repairable and energy efficient.
- Pack lunches in reusable food containers.
- Use your own cloth bag or reuse brown or plastic grocery bags.
- Buy concentrates.
- Look for products that are either biodegradable or nontoxic.
- Buy recycled products.
- Donate clean clothing in good condition to a charity or sell through consignment shops and garage sales. Buy used clothing.

Recycling Problem Materials

State law requires the following items to be recycled. In some cases, payment is required. Charges vary with the place of business and type of material. It may be more convenient to recycle these old items at the store where you buy the new item. The Rice County Recycling Center will accept all of these items from Rice County residences. **Businesses should call for information on disposal options.**

- **Tires** – Most tire dealers accept tires for recycling. Tires may also be recycled at the Rice County Recycling Center for a fee.
- **Batteries** – Businesses that sell automotive (lead acid) batteries accept used batteries for recycling. **All rechargeable batteries must be recycled**, but household alkaline batteries may be trashed.
- **Major Appliances** – Washers, dryers, dishwashers, hot water heaters, garbage disposals, trash compactors, microwave ovens, stoves, air conditioners, refrigerators, freezers, heat pumps, dehumidifiers and furnaces can be recycled at the Rice County Recycling Center for a fee.
- **Fluorescent Lamps** – Some area hardware stores will accept fluorescent bulbs for recycling, as does the Rice County Household Hazardous Waste Program.
- **Used Motor Oil and Motor Oil Filters** – Used oil and filters are accepted at the Rice County Recycling Center free of charge. Many full-service auto centers, auto parts dealers and places that sell oil filters will also accept oil.
- **Electronics** – TVs, computer monitors, computer towers, small printers, small electronics and small rechargeable devices are all accepted at the Rice County Recycling Center for a fee.

Single Sort Residential Recycling

Place all of your recyclable materials into the same blue cart. Set your cart in the same location as your trash and allow three feet of space around the container.

YES

- Glass (clear/green/brown) bottles and jars
- Aluminum and tin food and beverage cans, pie tins, foil
- Plastic bottles (#1 and #2) with narrow necks
- Paper (newspaper, junk mail, magazines, catalogs, office paper)
- Dry, non-coated food paper boxboard
- Small, flat pieces of corrugated cardboard box material



NO

- Garbage, food waste, diapers
- Tissue paper, paper cups, paper plates, napkins
- Plastic bags, meat or dairy plastic or paper packaging
- Wax or plastic wrap, plastic bags
- Freezer food packaging
- Plastic deli, produce or take-out packaging
- Packaging film
- Styrofoam packaging
- Window glass, ceramics, dishware, light bulbs, mirrors