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Carlton County

County-wide newsletter brought to you by the County Coordinator's Office

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Governor's Budget Discussion Held in Carlton County

Ahead of another February snowstorm, Minnesota Commissioner of Human Services Tony Lourey, Minnesota Commissioner of Agriculture Thom Petersen, and Vice-President of the Minnesota Farmer's Union Bryan Klabunde joined residents of the Northland at the Carlton County Community Services Building for a town hall-style meeting to share some details of Governor Tim Walz's newly released budget.

The Governor's budget includes significant increases in spending for health and human services. Lourey noted that access to health care and mental health resources for Minnesotans would take a priority in the budget. Both Petersen and Bryan Klabunde noted the struggles farmers and their families face when accessing mental health and health care in Minnesota. Currently, there are farm advocates available to help counsel farmers with funding for additional advocates in the budget. Lourey touched on the Governor's ONECare proposal which will be an

important factor in assuring Minnesotans have affordable healthcare choices. It would allow for a 20% subsidy to help with the cost of premiums for those individuals who are not able to access other premium tax credits.

Lourey also mentioned Certified Community Health Behavioral Clinics in Minnesota. Currently there are six and Governor Walz's proposal would add another five to regions in the state. Also mentioned, was the additional funding to expand opioid treatment in the state for the next two years.



MCIT's Employee Assistance Program

Article credit: MCIT

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) helps MCIT member officials, employees and their dependents identify and resolve challenges that may affect their performance at work. It is a no-cost, voluntary program that can assist employees, their spouse and dependents with difficult personal issues through access to professional counselors.

The EAP offers support for a variety of concerns: relationships, work-related issues, family challenges, stress, depression, anxiety, financial problems, loss and grief, substance abuse and other personal concerns.

The EAP connects individuals with qualified counselors who match the circumstances for which they seek assistance. Individuals seeking assistance can reach the EAP toll-free at 1-800-550-6248 or online at SandCreekEAP.com. Individuals in crisis should call, and not use the online intake form.

Employee Service Awards



Sarah Krocka
PHHS
10 Years

Deb Anderson
Attorney's Office
10 Years

Tom Proulx
County Commissioner
10 Years

Ann Berglund
PHHS
10 Years

Crystal Randall
PHHS
30 Years

Tina Buscher
PHHS
30 Years

Patti Hart
PHHS
30 Years

CCHS Grad Tina Nelson Now a Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Article credit: WTIP North Shore Community Radio



Tina Nelson (Northeast Minnesota Suicide Prevention Coordinator)

Tina Nelson is a 2010 graduate of Cook County High School. She was very active in CCHS sports, volleyball and basketball. She has gone on to be the head volleyball coach and assistant basketball coach at Marshall School in Duluth. But that is a part time job – she also works full time as a public health educator. She is now the Northeast Minnesota suicide prevention coordinator.

She travels around the state speaking at area schools and sharing the suicide prevention message and resources that are available, such as the Minnesota Crisis Text Line. She tells students that the text line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Whether it is for yourself or a friend, help is available by texting MN to 741741.

More information is available [online](#):

WTIP's Rhonda Silence speaks with Tina Nelson about the important job she is doing in northeastern Minnesota.

Carlton County Jail's Family Friendly Visiting Program

Parental incarceration can greatly impact a child. When a parent goes to jail, the child may experience challenges at home, in school, and in their community in the form of unpredictability in family relationships, difficulty with school relationships and performance, struggles with mental health, and social along with institutional stigma.

To address this issue, the Family Friendly Visiting Program was developed by the Carlton County Jail's Program Director Stephanie Upton, with assistance from the Carlton County Children and Family Collaborative, in July of 2018. Prior to implementation, changes were made to the Law Enforcement Center's public lobby. A little person couch, little person chair, and a "Take a Book Home" Little Blue Bookshelf from the United Way, were added. Sesame Street characters were also added to the visitor's non-contact visiting area. During a Family Friendly Visit, two baskets containing the same books are placed in the visiting area; one basket for the inmate, and the other for the children.

The steps for an inmate to participate in the program are simple. After they complete the Jail Orientation, they are asked if they have a minor biological, adopted, foster, or guardian child. If they answer yes, the inmate is informed of the Family Friendly Visiting Program. The inmate must be in good standing and free of any violations or negative incidents while in jail. Per the Department of Corrections, minor children must be accompanied in the non-contact area by an adult. However, the visiting only takes place with their children, and they are not allowed to communicate with the accompanying adult. After the visit, the inmate is given a work assignment (worksheet). The inmate must adequately participate and complete their work assignment, or continued involvement with the program will be in jeopardy.

After five weeks of participating in the program, inmates are given a copy of the book, *Parenting from Prison: A Hands-On Guide for Incarcerated Parents*. Their follow-up assignments from that point forward are to explain how the chapter reading (one chapter per week beginning with the fifth week), is helping them



Stephanie Upton (Carlton County Jail's Family Friendly Visiting Program Director)

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2019 Carlton County Board of Commissioners



Dick Brenner
Chairperson
218.879.5572

District 1
Dick.Brenner@co.carlton.mn.us



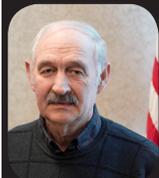
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*Board meetings are held at the Transportation Building on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 8:30 a.m. and the 4th Monday of every month at 4:00 p.m.

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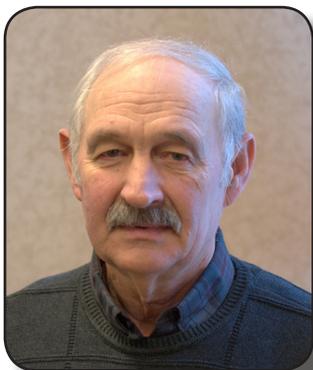
with their parenting skills and assisting in the interaction with their children. One inmate wrote: "In the first chapter my eyes were really opened to the whole situation. I understand the situation is tough, but my blinders may have been on a little until I read this. I put myself in their shoes and thought how distracting, how draining, how heart wrenching it must be. I am sitting here worried about myself and they are without me. I just can't imagine being them."

An inmate who has participated in the program for a lengthy time, who was going to be sentenced and transported to prison, was asked for his final task to complete an "exit interview" essay. This inmate had nearly a dozen visits with his children, was able to give them a recorded book that was donated by the Carlton Area Lion's Club, and was allowed a final contact visit. He was told the Family Friendly Visiting Program was developed to improve the quality of the visits and that we would appreciate his thoughts and viewpoints on how the program impacted his incarceration, what benefits he found for himself and his children, and any improvement he might suggest. He completed an eight page essay, in which he said:

"This program is very beneficial for me and my children. Being incarcerated is not easy for anyone involved. My children's behavior was showing rapid detrition. Their behavior at home was horrible. Their grades were showing low scores with no improvement. Also, my son was getting in trouble almost every day at school resulting in detention. The first few visits were slow to show progress, but as time progressed I was able to reinforce their mom's discipline at home as well as her decisions on how she wanted to parent. When they realized that I had their mother's back fully, they began to see that I didn't condone their behavior and they would also have to answer to me during a visit or a call home. During every visit, I spent a good portion asking about grades and behavior in a positive way. Giving a pat on the back where it was deserved and also going into discussion about something that upset me that shouldn't have happened at school. I learned that letting that talk, letting them express their thoughts and feelings got me far. It really helped close the gap on the separation anxiety for all of us. Secondly, this program helped me grow as well. The book I read really opened my eyes. It also totally changed my thoughts of maybe I should just let them be and distance myself. As I learned more about myself, and them, that couldn't be further from the truth. See as our visits went on I seen the change in them and I felt the change in myself. As I helped them grow emotionally and physically, I also was growing and healing wounds inside myself. Even if I am not there physically, it doesn't mean I'm not needed by them and I never thought of it that way. I was able to lead my children gently to the fact that dad's going to be gone for a while. I learned how to talk to them by reading the book provided, how to answer questions, what to say to answer some of their fears. We learned to cope together, this whole situation is terrible but everyone involved is better prepared for it now. I really watched my attitude, overall behavior as well. I realized this program is a privilege and it was one I didn't want to lose. It really kept me grounded as well as occupied my time preparing for each visit. I would like to say that being a part of this really turned my life around. Immediately my thoughts of using drugs and other things that impacted my life negatively were forgotten. Seeing my children smile, laugh, and just to see what I'm missing out on really impacted me hugely. The realization of how much they need me turned my attitude right around. Having to face them made me see what I've been doing is wrong way more than just a jail cell ever will. It was tough, but it made me realize that I don't want this life for them or for me and I'm dedicated to turn my life around. Within a few visits my children's school lives as well as home life improved noticeably. The interaction was good for me and them. The worksheets given after each visit were nice because they made me really think deeper into the visits and also made me focus more on Family Friendly Visiting being just another visit cause it's so much more than that. My last visit was such a special reward for being involved in this program. I got to see my children in person. All these months of through the glass visits, trying to find ways to interact through glass. I am so grateful and today truly confirmed that I am done with this life. I got some real great reasons to succeed. Two beautiful reasons. We got to draw and color together, and hug and play. During the visit, staff sat in on the visit and it felt so natural. At first I thought man, a uniformed guard, but even I only thought about it for less than a minute. She interacted with my children so perfectly. I felt so good about the situation. I appreciate her coloring with my daughter while I bonded with my son. I actually thought it went perfect and at no point was it awkward. I think it was very nice of Steph to engage with my family. Actually I'm glad she did. I may have felt awkward if she didn't. Her presence in the room added to the visit. I was able to see my daughter interact with someone and see how smart and how her personality has developed."

For more information on the Carlton County Jail's Family Friendly Visiting Program, please contact Jail Administrator Paul Coughlin at paul.coughlin@co.carlton.mn.us, or Program Director Stephanie Upton at stephanie.upton@co.carlton.mn.us.

Let's Get Acquainted with Carlton County Commissioner Mark Thell



Commissioner Mark Thell is the most recent member of the Carlton County Board of Commissioners. Elected in November, 2018, and sworn into duty on January 8, 2019, he represents the citizens of District 4. Commissioner Thell recently took time to sit down with us shortly after he had completed his 90th day of service to share with our readers how those first 90 days had gone, as well as a little bit about himself.

Commissioner Thell, tell us a little about yourself: where you live, what you do/have done for work, your family, hobbies, interests, travel, etc.

My wife Terri and I farm here in the far northeast section of Blackhoof Township. Along with our youngest son Jim, we direct market organic grass-fed beef, pork and chicken. Three of our five grandchildren live on part of the original Thell farm in Silver Brook Township and spend a lot of time with us enjoying the farm

and challenging us with some great card games.

How did you become interested in serving as a county commissioner and have you served Carlton County in any other elected positions?

Prior to being elected as a county commissioner, I served for 18 years as a Carlton County soil and water supervisor, an elected position. I developed a number of positive working relationships with county commissioners and staff during that time and at the same time became increasingly familiar with their work and the challenges they faced. When the 4th District seat opened up four years ago a number of people encouraged me to run. I took their advice again in 2018 and I am happy to say I was successful.

What are some of your goals and objectives?

A few of my immediate goals include lowering taxes while supporting high quality services, including good roads and safe communities, and bringing broadband to as many homes as possible. Just as I did when I was a soil and water supervisor, I intend to identify, prioritize, and resolve the problems facing all county residents in a cost-effective manner while seeking state and federal funding to cover mandated programs.

You have been in office now for just over 90 days. What have you learned so far and what, if anything, has come as a surprise to you?

So far no major surprises. I have worked hard to learn all the county's operational procedures as well as what are currently the most pressing issues. Part of that process has included being not just a good listener, but an active one. I understand that I am recently elected and learning new things in this position every day, but at the same time it is important that I actively participate in the decision making process, which I am proud to say I have done.

You attended the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) new commissioner training near the end of January. Was that training helpful, what if anything about the training stood out to you, and is AMC a valuable asset to local county government?

I did attend the Association of Minnesota County's new commissioner training in St. Paul in January. It was time well spent and provided a great opportunity to network with commissioners and department heads from across the state and hear the issues they are facing. One thing that really stood out was a presentation on the benefits of striving to make consensus based decisions rather than being a "3 to 2 vote county". Yes, it is true that you can move agenda items by a 3 to 2 vote, but experience tells us that the most successful outcomes are derived from the full support of your fellow commissioners. If you are willing to work at it, you can achieve consensus without disregarding individual values and perspective.

What are some of the committees you have been assigned to serve on as commissioner and what do you feel you bring to those committees that will enhance the work that they do?

Committees, committees, and more committees seem to be the norm in government and are often criticized as a negative use of time. What I have found is that if a committee is well run and focused, it can be a positive working tool that brings the business of the people to the full board of commissioners. The committees I serve on affect the county budget both directly and indirectly in a number of ways, including the support of nonprofit work and service provision throughout Carlton County. My prior experience with committees as a SWCD supervisor has been immensely helpful,

Carlton County Committee's

Continued from page 4

Building Committee -
2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:30 a.m.
(Transportation Building -TB)

Committee of the Whole -
1st Tuesday of the month at 4:00 p.m. (TB)

Diversity Committee -
3rd Thursday of the month at 9:00 a.m.
(PH&HS)

Finance Committee -
1st Tuesday of the month at 2:30 p.m. (TB)

Policy Committee -
3rd Monday of the month at 2:00 p.m.
(Law Enforcement Center - LEC)

Management Team -
1st Tuesday of the month at 8:30 a.m. (TB)

Supervisors Committee -
3rd Thursday quarterly at 2:00 p.m.
(Varies)

Wellness Committee -
2nd Wednesday of the month at 8:30 a.m.
(PH&HS)

For a more detailed Carlton County
Committee list [click here](#).



Are you interested in submitting an article in the next Carlton County Newsletter? Email or mail your articles and pictures by the June 21, 2019 deadline to:

Shanny Hurst
Carlton County Coordinator's Office
P.O. Box 510
Carlton, MN 55718
shanny.hurst@co.carlton.mn.us

*Please note that all submissions are subject to editing, as needed.

as are the good efforts of county staff and others assigned to our committees.

Why should people value their local county government?

The value of local government is maybe best described as ensuring that our residents can leave their homes, engage with others in and around our communities, and eventually return home safely. Feeling secure in your home and neighborhood helps to foster positive engagement, including with local officials and county staff, which in turn helps to grow healthier and happier communities.

Why are you proud of Carlton County and why should individuals or businesses be interested in visiting and even living in Carlton County? We enjoy four seasons, each abundant with unique beauty. Each season brings opportunities to enjoy the fields, forests and natural landscapes of Carlton County. Our local businesses and manufacturers provide good paying jobs, our communities support great schools, and our natural resources, especially our water, provide for healthy living, recreation, and sustainable farming. So yes, we have great diversity in our agriculture and business communities to support sustainable growth and enhance the lives of our residents.

What do you like to do when you are not working or serving as commissioner? I personally enjoy sharing good clean jokes with others. My wife and I enjoy our farm life along with sharing time with our family and the numerous friends and couple groups we hang out with.



Roll Out!
11AM - 3PM
SUNDAY
JUNE 9



This JUST FOR FUN community event is geared to encourage physical fitness for everyone, while enjoying an afternoon on the Munger Trail! START ANYWHERE and ride the trail through Carlton County, activities and refreshments will be available along the way!
Helmets are strongly encouraged!

ACTIVITIES & REFRESHMENTS AT EVERY STOP

Treats, food, water, activities and entertainment at each of the four rest stops:
The DNR pavilion in Carlton, TJ's in Mahtowa, the Munger Trail
Parking lot in Barnum and the Train Depot in Moose Lake.

Check out the facebook event for more details!

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

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