

# Redwood County Connection

Vol. 1, No. 2

The Official Newsletter of Redwood County

Fall Edition 2016

## Redwood County Celebrates 125th Anniversary of the Courthouse

In this issue, we celebrate the Redwood County Courthouse's Sesquicentennial (125th) Anniversary. Turning back the pages of history..... In 1864, the Minnesota State Legislature established the county seat at Redwood Falls, but when officers were sworn in, there was no thought given to permanent facilities; the board simply met around somebody's kitchen table. At their annual meeting January 1, 1867, the board rented a suitable room for county offices from O.C. Martin, then board chairman. When that contract expired, Sam McPhail deeded the courthouse square to the county May 3, 1872. In June, 1873, county need had grown to an extent that larger quarters were needed and a 28-foot square, 21-foot high frame courthouse was erected in the southwest corner of the square. By 1890, the courthouse was again deemed inadequate and the commissioners accepted preliminary sketches of a brick structure, appropriated \$5,000 for construction of a basement and foundation in the center of the square. February 26, 1891, they passed a resolution stating "that the present courthouse and county offices and vault are insufficient, unsafe and dangerous and not in suitable condition or fit for the purpose designed.

"Therefore after due consideration it is determined by the board of county commissioners that a new substantial and suitable courthouse be built at the county seat of this county . . ."

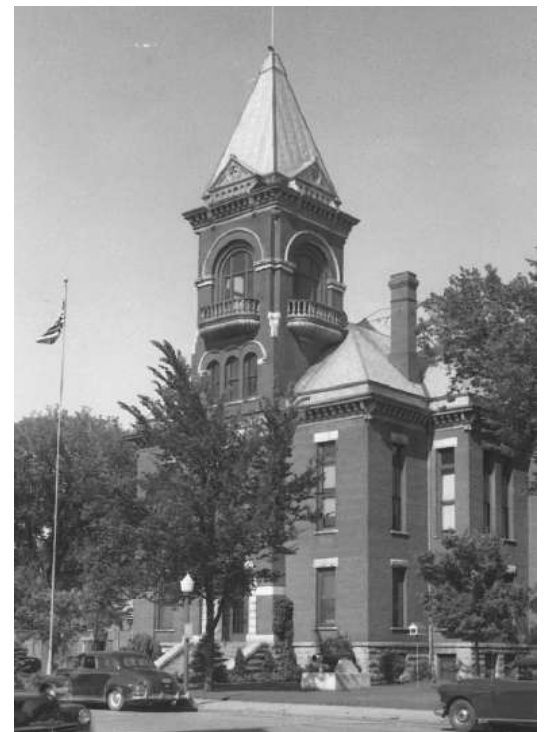


Redwood County Commissioners and employees would like to invite you to the Redwood County Courthouse on

**Thursday, October 6th from 2-4 p.m.**

Guided tours will be given of various areas in the Courthouse including the new Child Advocacy Center and the Restorative Justice Area.

Cookies and refreshments will also be served.



## Redwood County Children's Advocacy Center

The Redwood County Children's Advocacy Center (Redwood County CAC), is the only Children's Advocacy Center in Southwestern Minnesota. Established in 2011 and originally funded with a grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation, the Redwood County CAC provides a safe space and uses a victim-centered approach to help child abuse victims.

"Investigations into allegations of sexual abuse often require that the victims be interviewed," said Steven S. Collins, the Redwood County Attorney. "Given the sensitive nature of those types of interviews, we need a safe place to bring the victims where they won't be traumatized further."

In 2016, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs awarded the county a grant to help expand the reach of the CAC and to assist in the accreditation process. Katie Salden was hired as the Coordinator for the CAC and she has worked tirelessly to institute and implement the National Children's Alliance Standards. She has spent the past eight months partnering with the Minnesota Children's Alliance to create the CAC protocol and to work toward accreditation.

In April, Katie applied for more grant funding through the Office of Justice Program Crime Victim Services Grant and was awarded additional five-year funding to keep the CAC Program running. The CAC has partnered with the Redwood County Attorney's office, Southwest Health and Human Services, Western Mental Health, New Horizons Crisis Center, the Redwood County Sheriff's office and other local law enforcement to create a multi-disciplinary team to enhance the investigation process of child abuse cases and conduct forensic interviews.

"We have moved forward substantially in the past eight months and are almost ready to open our newly expanded center," said Collins. "We hope that soon we will have a regional facility that serves all counties in Southwestern Minnesota." Please join us for an open house from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on October 6, 2016.



**Katie Salden**  
**CAC Coordinator**

## What is Restorative Justice or Circle?

Restorative Justice is an alternative to the traditional juvenile justice system including all those that were affected to repair the harm that was caused by the offense. In Restorative Justice, the Circle Process, an indigenous practice to have intentional dialogue about what happened and build relationships within the safe space of the Circle.

Here are some of the fundamental core roots of the Circle Process:

- Circles draw on our best values;
- Circles help participants respond from one's best self;
- Circles build community;
- Circles create a space for deep listening and being heard;
- Circles generate mutual understanding and respect;
- Circles honor all voices equally;
- Circles make decisions by consensus;
- Circles cultivate mutual support;
- Circles honor the gifts, knowledge, talents, and experiences that each participant brings.



In the Fall of 2013, Dona Larkin was asked to commission a mural in the Restorative Justice office. The idea was to bring the fundamental elements of the Circle Process, the process to have these conversations, to life within the mural; giving the room a more comfortable feel for some difficult conversations. The mural had quite a bit of community support with many people providing input with items to be include into the mural, as well as many people participating in picking up a brush and helped with some of the painting. The final mural itself is a result of one of the most important components of Restorative Justice, inclusion, everyone being included to have an opportunity to contribute to an amazing work of art that can be shared with an entire community.

Dona put on the finishing touches of the complete room mural in September of 2015. We welcome visitors to come tour the Restorative Justice area on October 6, 2016 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. to view this spectacular work of art.

## From the Administrator's Desk...

Working in government for all of these years, it has become very clear to me that "The only thing that is constant is change".

The County Administrator's job is to implement county board policies, promote interests with other governmental agencies and partners, to provide direction to departments to achieve the county's overarching goals and develop the budget. The administrator makes recommendations to the county board, and provides the leadership for the day to day activities to assure effective delivery of county services.

In our business of providing services of county government, we deal with changes at an overwhelming rate. Demographic changes, expectations on the part of our citizens, technology, social and public health challenges and new laws are some of the reasons county government has to be resilient in responding to the need for change. The State Legislature has a very direct impact on county functions in the laws they pass, how we deliver the services and how we spend our limited financial resources.

As we all steer through these activities, the goal is intended to better serve our public. In our world of County Government, change is simply a reality. As we navigate these changes, service to the citizens is the guiding force in how we make decisions and manage the process. Our County Board, Department Management Team and our dedicated employees find good value in the input that we get from citizens.

We are at the midpoint of 2016 and already the Board and staff are working on the 2017 budget, taking into account the issues, legislative changes, and expectations of our service delivery. With the legislative session ending and no tax bill adopted, we are doing our best to provide these services you've come to expect with minimal impact on taxes. Budgeting work always comes down to the bottom line....what's the draw on property taxes? Our efforts come down to keeping the levy affordable. While the final levy won't be determined until December, the Board will be setting their preliminary levy no later than September 30. This preliminary levy number goes out to property taxpayers in November as the county's "not to exceed levy" amount prior to the public hearing and finalization of the budget. The Truth-in Taxation hearing is set for the public's input into the budget and levy setting for the subsequent year.

Public comment is welcomed at all County Board meetings and can also be directed to the County Administrator's office at 507-637-4016.



**Vicki Knobloch**  
**County Administrator**

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## Road and Bridge Construction

Bridge replacement on CR 62 over Highwater Creek on the Redwood/Cottonwood County line is in progress. The existing steel beam span bridge was built in 1954 and was 24.1 feet wide by 83.8 feet long. The existing bridge was only posted for 44,000 lbs total weight, that is almost half the legal load of 80,000 lbs. When this project is complete the new proposed bridge will be a 3 span slab bridge 32 feet wide by 98 feet long.

The construction price tag for the new bridge is \$372,606.

Funding for the bridge comes from the following:

1. Gas taxes collected by the federal government for transportation projects (\$296,000),
2. State of MN bridge bond funds (\$70,046.87), and
3. Local property taxes (\$6,559.13).





Keeping citizens informed.

Redwood County offers a CodeRED Community Notification System to send important alerts and time-sensitive messages to residents.

The company-owned redundant data centers help ensure our data is safe, and that we will be able to send messages to thousands of individuals within minutes. We're excited to have the ability to communicate with our residents through text, phone, email and social media, providing the information they need-to-know to make better informed decisions.

Registration for this notification service is customized, allowing residents to choose which alerts they'd like to sign up for and how they would prefer to receive them. Residents can choose several different methods: landline, cell phone, email, text message, TTY, or even a combination. These alerts can be specific to streets, neighborhoods, or regions so that residents in affected areas are sure to receive this valuable information.

Additionally, residents and visitors alike can keep track of alerts in Redwood County with the CodeRED Mobile App, which notifies smartphone holders of real-time alerts in the area. The mobile technology for CodeRED is extremely advanced, providing us enhanced flexibility to issue general and/or emergency messages. We can launch alerts from anywhere at any time, and residents potentially impacted by weather and other time sensitive events will receive them directly to their smartphones. This all happens within seconds, which can make a huge difference in saving lives.

All residents are encouraged to visit [www.co.redwood.mn.us](http://www.co.redwood.mn.us) to sign up for CodeRED and immediately start receiving these informative, life-saving alerts.

## Redwood County Property Tax Payment Options:

The second half property taxes are due and payable October 17, 2016. All payments sent in by mail must be POSTMARKED and all payments made on line must be DATED no later than October 17, 2016, to be accepted without penalty.

Redwood County has made available a fast, convenient, hassle-free way to pay your property tax payments with the Direct Payment Plan. With this convenient program, you can have your property tax payment automatically deducted from your checking or savings account at your financial institution on a semi-annual or annual basis. To obtain a form, please call the Auditor/Treasurer Department at 507-637-4013 or visit our website at <http://www.redwoodcounty-mn.us>.

A tax payment drop box located on the north side of the Government Center has been added for after hour payments.

Credit card payments are accepted on-line.

Visit <http://www.redwoodcounty-mn.us> and go to "Redwood County Tax Parcel Information" to make a payment.

### **WHAT'S NEW IN THE LICENSE CENTER!**

There have been a few changes over the past couple years in the License Center and more changes to come in the future.

As of July 1st, 2015, all CDL drivers (Class A, B & C) are federally mandated to provide a one-time Proof of Citizenship when renewing their license.

The following list meets the requirements for proof of citizenship:

- Valid, unexpired U.S. passport or passport card
- Certified copy of birth certificate from any U.S. state
- Consular report of birth abroad issued by the U.S. Department or state
- Certificate of Naturalization or Certificate of Citizenship issued by U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Valid unexpired Permanent Resident Card
- Unexpired employment authorization document issued by USCIS or an unexpired foreign passport accompanied by an approved I-94 form.

If the name on the above document is different from the current name on the CDL, you must also present proof of the legal name change(s). Acceptable proof consists of certified marriage certificates, certified divorce decrees or other certified court orders.

## New Veterans Service Vehicle

The Redwood County Veterans Service Office has been running a transportation program for 25 years to get veteran to and from their medical appointments at the VA hospitals. This program was run utilizing county tax dollars to fund the fuel, maintenance, and miscellaneous expenses.

On August 16th, with the recommendation of the CVSO, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to enter into a program with the US Department of Veterans Affairs and Disabled American Veterans (DAV). This program will replace the old program of having to collect travel pay from veterans. The new vehicle is donated to the VA hospital and then assigned to the Redwood County Veteran Service Office (VSO) that will act as a transportation hub.

The VSO will be making some changes to how we operate and we intend on offering door to door service for veteran with medical appointments at the VA. The pick up times will vary based on the route, number of riders, and times of appointments.

This will be a cost savings to Redwood County and will allow us to offer premier service to our veteran constituents who earned the best care anywhere.



## Get your Passport at Redwood County

Passport books and cards can be applied for in the Administration Office at the Government Center. Passports are required for International travel only. The new MN REAL ID will not be needed for domestic flights until 2018.

You will need the following items:

- \* Passport Application
- \* Certified Birth Certificate
- \* Passport Picture
- \* Valid Driver's License or State ID
- \* Minors under age 16 must appear with both parents and the parents must have valid driver's license or state ID.

For more information go to [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) or call 507-637-4016.

Note: The US Department of State is expecting an increase of passport applications through 2018. Submit your passport application well ahead of your planned travel dates in order to avoid possible delays. The current processing time is 6 weeks.



Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity or a program to help you as an older adult to continue to live independently in your home and remain a vital member of the community? A.C.E. of SW Minnesota – Redwood County (formerly known as Redwood County Volunteers) has been working in Redwood County for the past 15 years.

The goal of A.C.E. is twofold. The first is to meet community needs by matching volunteers with activities that fit their interests, experience, and schedules. Presently there are over 450 volunteers enrolled with A.C.E. in Redwood County who in 2015 donated 50,074 volunteer hours.

A.C.E. also provides programs & support to help the aging in our community and their caregivers.

Programs include:

- \* Bone Builders Exercise classes
- \* Telephone Reassurance
- \* Caregiver Respite
- \* Caregiver Coaching & Support Group
- \* Dementia Education & Support Services

- \* Powerful Tools for Caregivers classes

- \* Matter of Balance Classes

- \* Better Choices, Better Health classes

Check out A.C.E. of SW MN on the web at - <http://www.aceswmn.org> or our Facebook page at Ace Redwood to learn more about our programs.

For more information about how you can be matched with volunteer opportunities or to receive more information about the programs supporting older adults contact:

Karen Christensen, Coordinator  
Redwood County  
1011 E. Elm Street #221  
Redwood Falls, MN 56283  
Phone: 507-627-1016

## We are not as active as we think!

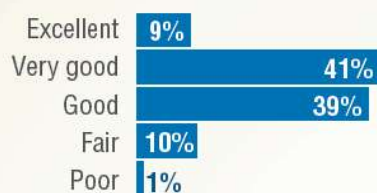
Fifty-six percent of Southwest Health and Human Services respondents that participated in the 2015 Southwest Minnesota Healthy Communities Survey consider themselves to be about the right weight while in reality, based on self-reported height and weight, seventy percent of respondents are overweight or obese. These adult respondents from SWHHS six counties of Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood and Rock plus 10 other Southwest Minnesota counties participated in the survey conducted between April and July 2015 so that Public Health can monitor the health and habits of residents in the area of physical activity, nutrition, tobacco use, dental health and mental health. These survey results will inform community lead efforts through the Minnesota Department of Health's Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), which aims to help Minnesotans live longer, healthier lives by reducing the burden of Chronic Disease.



Physical activity is important for good health. And, while residents in SW Minnesota report an increase in their physical activity by better utilizing walking paths and trails since 2010, they are also reporting several barriers that contribute to a lack of physical activity, including lack of self-discipline, will-power and time. Eighteen percent of respondents met the recommendations of moderate physical activity and vigorous physical activity, while 60% met neither recommendation. Over half (51%) of the respondents reported over two hours of "screen time" per day. "This is where SHIP initiatives through workplace wellness, active living in communities and active school day encourage best practices for achieving the recommended amount of physical activity per day." States Judy Pitzl, SHIP Coordinator for SWHHS.

To learn more about the Southwest Minnesota Healthy Communities Survey and see county level results, please visit SWHHS's website at [www.swmhhs.com/public-health-assessment-and-planning](http://www.swmhhs.com/public-health-assessment-and-planning). The information gathered from this survey will be utilized to guide Public Health activities aimed at helping residents of SWHHS live longer, healthier lives. For questions, call Carol Biren, Public Health Division Director at 507-532-4136.

### Redwood County adult residents' ratings of their overall health



Redwood County adult residents are less likely to say their health is "excellent" compared with the state as a whole



**38%** ate **five or more servings of fruits and vegetables** on the day prior to taking the survey

## Southwest Health and Human Services

Southwest Health and Human Services (SWHHS) is a multi-county agency committed to strengthening individuals, families and communities by providing quality services in a respectful, caring and cost-effective manner.

### SWHHS Departments:

Financial Assistance services determine eligibility for services ranging from cash assistance, food support, health care and emergency assistance.

Child Support services assist in establishing parentage, establishing child support, enforcing those orders, providing medical, dental and child care support, collecting and processing payments.

Social Services provides services that include special needs adoption, adult and children's mental health, adult and child protection, chemical health, developmental disabilities, foster care, child care assistance, individuals with disabilities/chronic illness.

Public Health provides services that assure a strong public health system, promotes healthy families and communities, prevention of infectious disease, safe and healthy environments, preparation of disasters and emergencies and availability of quality health services.

## Minnesota River Valley Recreation and Conservation Master Plan

Redwood and Renville Counties recognize the need to protect, restore, and enhance the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the Minnesota River Valley for current and future generations to explore and enjoy. The counties also recognize that the Minnesota River Valley provides an economic opportunity to develop an outdoor recreational destination that would promote regional economic growth, development, and tourism. Other project goals are to create interest, jobs and recreation to attract young professionals to reside the area. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is collaborating in developing a master plan to address the conservation of the natural and cultural resources and to provide for the shared use, enjoyment, and understanding of these resources through a broad selection of outdoor recreational opportunities and recreational travel routes that connect units of the outdoor recreation system in the river valley. The plan will address natural and cultural resources, interpretive services, recreational opportunities, and administrative activities in the area and provide recommendations on the unit designation of the area under the Outdoor Recreation System.

To provide for the shared use, enjoyment, and understanding of these resources through a broad selection of outdoor recreational opportunities and recreational travel routes that connect units of the outdoor recreation system in the river valley.

For more information please contact the Redwood County Environmental Office at 507-637-4023, or visit <http://www.mnrivervalleymasterplan.org/home>



## Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Program

In 2014, a county tax bill was passed that provides funds for aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention. Each year, \$10 million will be provided to Minnesota counties to support AIS prevention programs. Redwood County receives a portion of this money to implement its AIS Prevention Plan. The plan is focused on providing education and outreach to our citizens on how we can help stop the spread of dangerous and destructive AIS. In 2016 this money also helped support the 4H underwater robotics AIS research program. For more information, please contact the Redwood County Environmental Office at (507) 637-4023.





### Redwood County Connection

Redwood County Government Center  
403 S Mill St  
PO Box 130  
Redwood Falls, MN 56283

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U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
MARSHALL, MN  
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## Contacts

Administration	637-4016
Assessor	637-4008
Attorney Office	637-4010
Auditor/Treasurer	637-4013
Court Administration	637-4018
Emergency Mgmt.	637-4035
Environmental	637-4023
Extension	637-4025
Highway Dept.	637-4056
Human Services	637-4050
License Center	637-4029
Public Health	637-4041
Probation Office	637-4047
Recorder	637-4032
Recycling Facility	637-1800
Restorative Justice	637-1139
Sheriff's Office	637-4036
Technology/IT	637-4017
Veteran's Office	637-4034

### Commissioners

Lon Walling	747-2175
Jim Salfer	342-3421
Dennis Groebner	692-2235
Priscilla Klabunde	637-3817
Sharon Hollatz	641-2999

## Plum Creek Designated a Regional Park

Redwood County's Plum Creek Park was recently designated as a park of "Regional Significance" by the Greater MN Regional Parks and Trails Commission.

This designation will enable Plum Creek Park the ability to apply for funding through the Clean Water Land and Legacy Fund. With the recent purchase of 10 additional acres of land and new sources of possible funding, the County will look at upgrades to the park with input and recommendations coming from the Parks and Trails Commission.



### E-Waste & Appliance Collections

**First Wednesday of each month from May through October from 2-6pm located behind the Redwood County Museum**

**Free Electronics:** CPU's, computer mouse, cell phones, radios, keyboards, VCR's, Speakers, iPods, cameras, GPS Units, CD Players, etc.

**Free Appliances:** Washers, Dryers, Dehumidifiers, Grills, Water Softeners, Stoves, household refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, etc.

There is a cost of \$8.00 for T.V.'s, laptops or anything with a screen and \$4.00 for scanners, printers, copiers and fax machines.

**\$50.00 for RV Refrigerators      Questions? Call 507-637-1800**