



Renville County 150th Anniversary 1866-2016

Volume 15



Fall 2016
Issue 3



County Commissioners held Board Meeting in Courthouse Board Room, 150th Event
Seated (L-R) Judy Pohl-Administration Assistant, John Stahl- District 4, Paul Setzepfandt-District 3, Randy Kramer-District 1, and Bob Fox – Board Chairman-District 2; Standing (L-R) LaMont Jacobson, District 5, and David Torgelson, County Attorney



Attendees at Board Meeting in Courthouse, 150th Event
Pat Kubesh, Former District 4 Commissioner & Kim Kirchoff, Appraiser-Assessor Department

Renville County Celebrates 150th Anniversary 1866-2016

Public Health Celebrates 100th Anniversary 1916-2016

The County's celebration events kicked off on August 9th with the Commissioners holding part of their weekly **Board meeting in the former County Commissioner** room located in the Courthouse. They held their meeting at the **Morton granite table** used for Commissioners meetings from **1903 to 1980**. The massive granite table made its way into the **Courthouse board room in the early 1900's** carried by a dozen men.

During the next three days, the Renville County Historical Society displayed artifacts from the past 150 years from its collections donated by local citizens at the county fair. As part of the celebration, the Renville County Government fair booth featured a Spin the Wheel game that quizzed fair attendees on the facts of the County's 150 years of history. One of the quiz questions revealed the little known fact that the first hospital in Renville County was built in 1925 by Dr. Aloysius Kaufmann in the town of Franklin.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

On a beautiful summer day, on August 20th, citizens participated in one of **two guided bus tours of the County's historical sites**. The narrated **East Loop Tour** of the county started in Olivia at the Courthouse and traveled east along Highway 212 with stops at the new County Hospital, the Hector Airport, the Hector Historical Center, a drive around Lake Allie, then headed south with lunch and a tour of Swedlanda Lutheran Church, followed with stops at the Fairfax Railroad Depot, the Birch Coulee Battlefield, and the Renville County Museum in Morton.



Connie and Ed Newberg hosted the stop at the Hector Airport. Connie presented the group with the history of the **airport established in 1927**. The group then toured one of hangers that is home to many antique planes and automobiles and learned about the crop dusting planes. The group moved on to tour the **Hector Historical Center** located downtown on Main Street. The center is home to several displays including early telephones, switchboards, old town pictures, a military collection and a whole room dedicated to school memorabilia. On the way to Lake Allie the group heard about the history of the county's **Lake Allie Park** and the Oakdale Golf Course. Next the bus traveled on to the **Swedlanda Lutheran Church** located in Palmyra Township. Pastor Charles Stewart told the group about the church's history and then the church ladies served lunch. As the bus went on its way to the next stop, the group drove by the Schweiss Farms and learned about their involvement with horses and manufacturing. The tour group then stopped at the **Fairfax Historical Depot Museum built in 1883**. The museum is overflowing with articles and relics from the Fairfax area. The group then traveled on through the town of Franklin and learned about the town's history. On the way to the **Birch Coulee Battlefield**, one of the sites of the 1862 US Dakota Conflict, the history of the conflict was passed on to the group. The **Renville County Museum** located in Morton was the last stop of the day hosted by Nicole Elzenga, museum director, and Richard Roper, museum volunteer. After a busy day of touring the group learned about the history of the county seat locations and courthouses.



A grand celebration commemorating the two anniversaries was held on Sunday, September 11th in the afternoon.

It started with employee guided tours of the Courthouse for attendees. Then a program was presented outside on the porch of the Courthouse with guests and citizens watching from the front lawn. The program started with Ron Kopacek, Bob Wittman and Mike Harmon of the **Olivia American Legion Post 186** and the **Olivia VFW Post 4097 Advancing the Colors**, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Harry Hawkinson, a member of the Sons of the American Legion, and Posting of the Colors. A moment of silence was then held to remember Patriot Day, 9/11, and all those who have served our Country. Attendees then joined in singing the Star Spangled Banner led by Joyce O'Halloran. Bob Fox, Renville County Board Chairman, made opening remarks and introduced special guests including previous County Commissioners, former department heads, township supervisors, city mayors and current county department heads. Then the entertainment part of the program commenced with a medley of patriotic music sung by the **Woodbury Singers of Renville County** directed by Richard Alton. The **Woodbury Singers** represented the county's towns of Bird Island, Danube, Fairfax, Franklin, Hector, and Olivia and even members from the metro. Followed by patriotic and fiddle music performed by **violinist, Dan Knapper**. The program was closed with a **retirement of the colors**. The celebration continued on in the County Government Services Center building with a display of the past 100 years of Public Health Service's



work in the county prepared by Jill Bruns, Public Health Services Director. **Cake and coffee was served to the attendees.** A video was shown from interviews conducted of citizens from every part of Renville County from ages 14 to 95 telling their stories of life in Renville County from the past, the present and future predictions produced by Gail Miller.

The final celebration event was the October 1st **West Loop** County historical site bus tour. The tour begin on a beautiful fall day in Olivia at the Courthouse parking lot and headed out west on Highway 212 with stops at the **Danube Railroad Depot, Renville Museum and Jail**, and the **Sacred Heart Museum**. Then south to sites along the Minnesota River Scenic Byway including **Skalbekken County Park**, the **Joseph R. Brown Memorial, Vicksburg County Park**, the **Schwandt Memorial**, the County's **Beaver Falls Park** and then onto the last tour stop at **Bechyn**.

The **Danube Railroad Depot** stop was hosted by Rod Black, local volunteer. The depot displays include unique railroad memorabilia, local town memorabilia and school photos. Next stop was the **Renville Museum** that once served as a school and the **Old City Brick Jailhouse** built in 1914. Mildred and Wayne Zaske, museum volunteers were on hand to



describe the historical artifacts from the local school, items belonging to Michael J. Dowling, a dental office display, a medical office display, and even a glass case of items representing recent and current businesses of the area. The **Sacred Heart Museum**, built in 1916, was once the home of the Trinity Lutheran Congregation. The museum curator, Sonja Thune, met the tour group and explained the history of the building and that of the Sacred Heart Area Historical Society. The museum is home to several different display areas, including military, sewing items, and a room of historical documents. The tour then headed

south to the county's beautiful **Skalbekken Park** located on the Minnesota River. The group spent time exploring the park and enjoying the beautiful views of the river. Next, it was on to the **Joseph R. Brown Memorial** ruins that was the site of the grand 19 room house that was constructed of local granite but destroyed by fire during the US Dakota Conflict. The tour continued to the second County Park of the day, **Vicksburg Park**, also located in the Minnesota River Valley. At this stop the group had a picnic lunch, enjoyed the park's spaces and heard about the Vicksburg area history from local resident, Dale Prah. The bus continued along the Scenic Byway to the **Schwandt Memorial** where the attendees learned about a family that lost their lives during the US Dakota Conflict. The tour then headed north to **Beaver Falls County Park** with a drive along the southern part and then through the northern part of the park. The next stop was the town of **Bechyn** for a tour and historical account of St Mary's Catholic Church given by Marcie Dworshak and Jeanne Wertish. Ending with a lunch of apple crisp and kolaches and then back to the Courthouse.

A special thank you to the 150th Anniversary planning committee members, Jill Bruns, Nicole Elzenga, Sara Folsted, Bob Fox, Jennifer Grund, Jeff Heerdt, Karrie Jansen, Susie Lang, Gail Miller, and John Stahl, and to all the participants and attendees who helped to celebrate an important moment in Renville County's History.

To watch the **video of the Renville County Citizens stories**, past, present and future predictions go to the **County's website at www.renvillecountymn.com**. You will also find a video of the September 11th Celebration and in case you missed the **East Loop** and **West Loop** Historic bus tours you will find self-guided tour information there as well.

Photos Courtesy of:
 Jill Bruns, Susie Lang, Rick Miller and Scott Tedrick,
 Editor of Renville County Register

Renville County

500 E. DePue Ave.
 Olivia, MN 56277

Phone: 320-523-3710

Email: LisaH@renvillecountymn.com

Web site: www.renvillecountymn.com

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A look back from 1916-2016

The First 50 Years...

- 1916** ~ Renville County was the first county in Minnesota to have a county public health nursing service funded by county taxes. The first nurse was Dorothy Motl serving from 1916-1918.
-
- 1920** ~ Diphtheria epidemic occurred, taking up much of the Public Health Nurse's time.
-
- 1924-1926** ~ Ann Nyquist worked for the County establishing a clinic for pregnant women and children. She later became the Director of Public Health Nursing for the MN Board of Health.
-
- 1933-1951** ~ Due to the financial difficulties caused during the Great Depression Renville County was without a county nurse.
-
- 1951** ~ The Commissioners decided to employ Jean Kolbe for the Renville County Public Health Nursing Service. She focused on school health, immunization clinics, mantoux testing, chest x-ray surveys, and making home calls through the '60s.

The Second 50 Years...

- 1976** ~ The MN Community Health Services Act legislation was passed that delineated the responsibilities of the state (MDH) and county governments in the planning, development, funding, and delivery of public health services. Redwood and Renville Counties formed as a joint powers entity under this act in 1978.
-
- 1978** ~ Renville County Public Health became a Medicare certified home health program.
-
- 1980's** ~ The county's population grew during the summer months with the migration of farm workers and their families. Local resources to meet their needs were strained, so a bi-lingual community health worker was hired.
-
- ~ AIDS was first discovered. County residents were fearful of this new disease resulting in the need for school and community education and home care services for those affected by the disease.
-
- ~ Minnesota began to move toward providing long term care support services based in the community as an alternative to institutionalization. In 1980, the Minnesota Legislature established a "Preadmission Screening and Alternative Care Grant Program" (PAS/AC) for the elderly.
-
- 1984** ~ Jean Kolbe retired and Jill Bruns was hired as the Director. Staff included 5 Public Health Nurses, 1 Licensed Practical Nurse, 6 Home Health Aides, and 1 Secretary/Accountant.
-
- ~ Troubled by the abortion rate of pregnancies for the County's residents, Bruns approached the Board to apply for a grant to deal with this issue. The Redwood/Renville CHS was awarded a Family Planning Special Project Grant, to educate the community from 1988-2002. As of 2014, the Renville County abortion rate was greatly reduced.
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- 1985** ~ The Women, Infant and Children (WIC) nutrition program and Renville County Hospice were founded and housed in the Public Health Department.
-
- 1986** ~ The MN Maternal and Child Health Block Grant gave local health departments grants that provided the means to hire additional staff for family home visiting.



The Second 50 Years...

- 1992** ~ Public Health entered into contracts with local school districts to deliver services by Licensed School Nurses.
- 1993** ~ Renville County was one of the founders of PACT 4 Families, a family services and children’s mental health collaborative
- 1995** ~ Renville County was a founder of the Southwest Immunization Registry, which electronically saved immunization records in a database for providers, schools and daycares access. Later, it became the foundation for the MN Immunization Information Connection, a web-based immunization database.
- 1998** ~ A County tobacco ordinance was passed to curtail sales to youth under the age of 18. In 2015, it was updated to include e-cigarettes with required education for all retailers and the continuation of annual retailer compliance checks.
- ~ Redwood-Renville CHS entered into a delegation agreement with MDH to provide local inspections of food establishments (restaurants, special events, catering, mobile units, etc.), pools, lodging (hotels and motels, group homes, etc.), manufactured home parks, migrant labor camps, and campgrounds.
- ~ Renville County was a founder of a county-owned public payer program, PrimeWest Health along with other counties. The County helps administer the program and Public Health Nurses have provided case management for the elderly, those in nursing homes, those with special needs such as mental illness or chemical dependency, complex health issues and pregnant women. Preventive and primary care is emphasized.
- ~ Jail health services were provided for the inmates of the Renville County Jail from 1998 to 2015.
- 2000** ~ At its peak Renville County Public Health’s home care program made 3,101 skilled nursing and 6,660 home health aide visits.
- ~ Due to community planning efforts, senior and assisted living buildings were constructed throughout the county which decreased the need for in-home care. Public Health then changed its focus from home care programs to address the needs of those with chronic disabilities, persistent mental illness, and addictions.
- ~ There was national concern for global attacks and the use of bio-warfare. Public Health received funding and support to begin addressing these issues. After the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Public Health was considered an essential part of the response for emergencies. Public Health was carving out its role in this arena when a tornado devastated the City of Buffalo Lake on June 24, 2003.
- 2001** ~ West Nile virus was first identified, causing infection in horses and humans. Public Health collected dead birds for testing.
- 2002** ~ Renville County Public Health Nursing Service officially changed its name to Renville County Public Health Services.
- 2006** ~ Twelve counties created a Joint Powers Board to administer and govern Supporting Hands Nurse-Family Partnership (SHNFP). It is a home visiting program to improve the health and life-course of low-income, first-time mothers and their children.
- 2008** ~ Bipartisan cooperation resulted in Minnesota’s landmark health reform initiative, designed to improve the health of Minnesotans and contain the spiraling costs of health care. The Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) is a component of this health reform initiative. Policies, systems and environmental strategies are being made that are slowly changing community norms and making healthy decisions an easier choice. This type of work is viewed as a big part of Public Health’s future.
- 2010** ~ The Renville Alliance for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drugs formed to increase collaboration among community partners and to prevent and reduce youth substance use.
- 2012** ~ Redwood-Renville CHS dissolved after the completion of a two-year organizational study. Redwood County Public Health became part of SWHHS. Renville joined with Kandiyohi County.
- 2014** ~ An Ebola Response Plan was developed with the local clinics and hospital.

Renville County Public Health Services is proud of its heritage and long history in serving Renville County by promoting and protecting the health of the community. Public Health is integral to the health of the community. Our success has been possible with a strong state-local partnership and working in concert with local partners, providers and residents. We will continue to listen to and hear the voice of the community, rising to meet the changing needs and challenges in the future.



HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS

105 South 5th Street, Suite 318 • Olivia, MN 56277 • (320) 523-3812 • www.renville.com

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Neil Linscheid, Extension Educator with U of M facilitated the Futures Workshop

Renville County Economic Development Workshop

The Renville County Economic Development Authority partnered with the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality in a Futures Workshop. The purpose of the

workshop was to learn more about Renville County's current economic situation and to explore new opportunities. Sixteen participants made up of representatives from all communities within Renville County spent an afternoon digging deep into how ten selected industries intermingle, among other topics. This format allowed the group to objectively look at the state of our local economy and examine the interactions and potential changes. The main question based on the data provided by the University of Minnesota was how would an increase or decrease of 100 jobs in a particular industry effect the County, area, region and State?

The industries examined included: sugar beet production, ethanol production, hand tool manufacturing, farm equipment manufacturing, telephone apparatus manufacturing, grocery stores, truck transportation, hospitals, insurance agencies, and other amusement and recreation activities.

A number of conclusions and ideas were generated during the workshop that will help to support the industries under discussion. Some of the conclusions or ideas included:

- Promote Renville County as a place for value-added agriculture
- Build awareness of locally-manufactured products
- Increase broadband access
- Address housing needs
- Address daycare availability
- Succession planning
- Encourage students to explore the trades
- Look at incentives to keep employees
- Encourage residents to buy local (insurance, groceries, etc.)
- Investments in aging services, keep people in county, transition into housing to fit their needs

Possible action steps were also discussed within the group. Participants agreed on a number of key items, including continued discussions and further research on daycare, broadband, and housing solutions, increased promotion on shopping local, and working more closely with the area businesses and manufacturers.

To see the full report from the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality, please visit www.renville.com.

A huge thank you to all those who participated!

NEWS FROM OUR NEIGHBORS

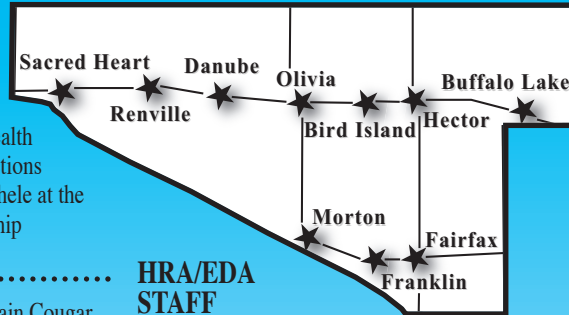
OLIVIA ~ 0% interest forgivable home repair loans are available from the City of Olivia. Eligible repairs include: electric, plumbing, roofs, siding, windows, doors, accessibility, health & safety items and more. Income restrictions do apply, for more information call Michele at the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership 1-888-468-8010, ext. 1617

FRANKLIN ~ The new Cedar Mountain Cougar Cub Child Care Center and City of Franklin Community Center are scheduled to be completed by early December. The Child Care Center will accept children ages 6 weeks to pre-k, call Jody Rose at 507-276-1805 for more information. The Community Center will be available for rentals in 2017. For more information contact the Franklin City Hall, 507-557-2259. Watch for grand opening information soon!

BUFFALO LAKE ~

December 3rd: Santa's Breakfast at the fire hall from 10:00am - 1:00pm and Santa will be there from 11:00am - 12:30 pm

Winter Fest: February 24 through March 3rd, 2017



HRA/EDA STAFF MEMBERS

Susie Lang, HRA/EDA Development Coordinator
Carrie Tersteeg, Administrative Assistant
Ron Louisiana, Maintenance
Housing Contacts: Amanda Johanneck, Pat Dingels

HRA/EDA BOARD

Joel Harmoning, Chair, District 2
Deb Lingl, Vice-Chair, District 3
Mark Thiesse, Secretary-Treasurer, District 4
Sandy Housman, District 1
Janette Wertish, District 5
Blair Anderson, Board at-Large
Wendy Schwint, Board At-Large
Randy Kramer, Ex Officio

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND

The Business Revolving Loan Fund is a unique and flexible source of supplemental financing for businesses that have a positive economic impact on Renville County.

INTEREST RATES AS LOW AS 2 %!

Building & Plant Renovations

Energy Efficiency Upgrades

Permanently Retaining Existing Jobs

Creating New Permanent Jobs

Working Capital Loans

Start-up

For more info contact, **Susie Lang**,
Renville County HRA/EDA.

Phone: (320) 523-3837 or E-Mail:
susiel@renvillecountymn.com

Funds made available by the Renville County Housing & Economic Development Authority, The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act, & a grant from the USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) Program.

ATTENTION BUSINESSES



Small grants are available to Renville County businesses!

If your businesses is looking at doing a project please consider submitting an application for one of the following deadlines...

- January 10
- April 10
- July 10
- October 10

This is a competitive application process where future projects will be scored based on need and potential economic impact.

Applications can be found at www.renville.com and submitted at any time during the grant cycle prior to the deadline.



Stretch Your Home Improvement Dollars!

Do you need a new furnace, or maybe some insulation or windows? Those are just some of the eligible improvements under the Renville County Home Ownership & Rehab Program. Homeowners in Renville County may qualify for a no-interest loan of up to \$5,000 for half the cost of their home improvement project. Downpayment assistance also available to first time homebuyers.

Maximum incomes

1 person	\$59,606
2 people	\$68,131
3 people	\$76,656
4 people	\$85,113
5 people	\$91,919
6 people	\$98,794
7 people	\$105,600
8 people	\$112,406



Contact Susie:
SusieL@renvillecountymn.com or (320) 523-3837

County Parks **OPEN** for Winter Recreational Activities

Citizens are welcome to enter any of the seven county parks by foot to enjoy hiking, cross country skiing, bird watching, and fishing as well as any other winter recreational activity. **Skalbekken** and **Vicksburg parks** have designated winter parking areas located inside the parks. **Lake Allie** has driveway access onto the lake. All other county parks will be closed to motorized vehicles from **November 1, 2016 through April 15, 2017**. Snowmobiling is allowed on signed trails specifically designated for such use within each park. Services such as restrooms and trash pickup will not be available during these months. **Archery deer hunting is allowed this year by permit only in Skalbekken, Vicksburg, Beaver Falls, Birch Coulee, Mack Lake, and Anderson Lake County Parks from November 1st to December 31st.** If you have any questions regarding use of the parks during the winter and early spring, please contact:

**Renville County Division of Environment
& Community Development: 320-523-3768**



**NEW in
2017**

Valuation Notices and Property Tax Statements

will be mailed to taxpayers together rather than separately in March of 2017.

Questions should be directed to:

Doug Bruns, County Assessor

Phone: 320-523-3645

Email: DougB@renvillecountymn.com

Marc Iverson, County Auditor/Treasurer

Phone: 320-523-2071

Email: MarcI@renvillecountymn.com

Tax

Energy Assistance Guide

The rising heating costs for the upcoming heating season is a concern for all of us. The Energy Assistance Program assists households with some of the costs of heating their homes. The program can also use 30% of the assistance to pay toward the electric bill. Energy Assistance Program Staff are encouraging households to set up a monthly payment plan with their heating company.

The Energy Assistance Program is taking applications for the upcoming heating season. If you own your home, the program may pay for emergency home furnace repairs or replacements. The program may also pay up to \$600 in emergency benefits. The program is based on how much it costs to heat your home, the number of people in your home and the amount of gross income all household members received in the previous three months from the month you apply. For an application, please call Renville County Energy Assistance at 320-523-5522 or 320-523-2202. See gross income guidelines below.

La cuesta de caliente esta ascendiendo por la estacion de invierno afectan todos. La programa de energia ayuda casas con parte de la cuesta de caliente para su casa. Podemos usar 30 porcentaje de asistencia a pagar la cuenta de eléctrica. Nosotros estamos promover todas casas pagan cada mes con una planea de pagos entre su compania de caliente.

El Programa de la Ayuda de la Energía toma las aplicaciones para la temporada que calienta. La programa puede pagar \$600 en beneficios emergencias. Si usted posee su hogar, la programa puede pagar para las reparaciones de horno de hogar de emergencia o reemplazos. El programa se basa en cuánto cuesta para calentar su hogar, el número de gente en su hogar y la cantidad de los ingresos que todos recibieron en los previos tres meses del mes que usted aplica. Para una aplicación, por favor llamada Renville County Energy Assistance en (320) 523-5522 o (320) 523-2202.

Income Guidelines/Pautas de Ingresos

Household Size/Miembros de Hogar	Maximum 3 Month Income/Maximo ingresos de 3 meses
1	\$6,135
2	\$8,023
3	\$9,910
4	\$11,798
5	\$13,686
6	\$15,574



FREEZING FOR FOOD

Please plan to contribute to the **DONATION DRIVE** for The Renville County Food Shelf

December 7th, 8th and 9th

- B & D Grocery Store in Olivia

December 8th

- Marynard's Grocery Store in Renville
- Island Market Grocery Store in Bird Island



**YOU MAY
 DONATE CASH
 OR FOOD.**



Salvation Army RED KETTLE Campaign 2016



Help the hungry, the homeless, the unemployed, and the underemployed of Renville County.

Make a **donation** this year for **Renville County** within **Renville County**.

Please Note ~ Red Kettle donations stay within the county of kettle location.

Donations by check, meant for **Renville County** should be made out to **Salvation Army of Renville County**.

PLEASE SEND CHECKS TO: Divisional Headquarters,
 2445 Prior Ave North, Roseville, MN 55113



Water Protection and Management

Volume 15

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COVER CROPS

Improving Soil Health Through Local Action

By Mike Sandager, Renville County SWCD Technician/Outreach Coordinator

Agriculture is at the heart of Renville County, connecting both communities and generations. However, row cropping in a prairie setting can present complex problems and concerns that range from poor soil health to degraded water quality with no easy, one-size-fits-all solution. Maintaining the status quo is unsustainable for future generations and could invite unpopular and ineffectual government regulations. A localized option for producers is to work with their local conservation offices on solutions specific to their land that will benefit all residents of the County. Cover crops are one such solution to reduce erosion problems and improve soil health.

Over 60 people attended a cover crop field day on September 23, 2016, at the Dean and Jim Dambrotten farm in western Renville County. The field day was a collaborative effort of local farmers, landowners, the Hawk Creek Watershed Project (HCWP), Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and Renville County Water Management. At the field day, Renville County SWCD Manager Holly Hatlewick spoke about the benefits and drawbacks of different cover crop seed mixes and the results of two test plots.

Hatlewick believes that in order for cover crops to be successful, land operators must consider their long-term and short-term goals, crop rotation, and cropping techniques. If these factors are taken into consideration, soil health and

“Cover Crops” continued on back



Holly Hatlewick, Renville County SWCD Manager, discusses the benefits of cover crops.

Field day participants viewed soil health demonstrations and cover crop test plots.



Taking Care of Your Septic System

Subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS), most commonly known as septic systems, are used to treat and dispose of the wastewater generated by non-municipal homes and businesses. Properly operating and maintaining your septic system can prevent costly repairs or premature replacement of your system.

Periodic removal of solids in the septic tank will ensure long-term performance of your system. Without proper maintenance, the sludge layer at the bottom of the tank and the floating scum layer will accumulate and begin to flow from the tank into the soil dispersal system, also known as the drainfield, leading to premature system failure.

To help prevent septic system problems and to extend the life of your drainfield, the following Best Management Practices are suggested:

Household Plumbing

- Control water use. Repair leaks, use low water use appliances and fixtures.
- Don't overload the system. Spread water usage throughout the day and week.

“Taking Care of Your Septic System” continued on back

COLD WEATHER REMINDER: Properly Store Chemicals!



Each year, numerous household chemicals such as paints, stains, and driveway sealants become household hazardous waste (HHW) simply because they were exposed to freezing temperatures.

Remember to read the product label to ensure proper storage. If you no longer have a use for hazardous products, bring them to either the Renville County Landfill and HHW Facility or the Kandiyohi County HHW Facility where they will be properly disposed of at no cost to Renville County residents. For additional information on HHW disposal options, visit www.renvillecountymn.com or call (320) 523-3760.

“Cover Crops” continued from front

profits can be boosted in the first year with annual increasing returns as the soil-improving effects accumulate. Direct benefits include reduced nutrient leaching and fertilizer input costs, increased carbon sequestration, grazing opportunities, and a reduction in costly drainage ditch cleanouts. Other benefits, including reduced pollution, erosion, and weed and insect pressure, may be difficult to financially quantify, but identification will help producers make sound, long-term decisions for their whole farm. The seed mixes for the test plots were chosen to maximize these benefits.

The test plots were located on a field with a corn-soybean rotation for over 15 years, spring and fall tillage, and no past cover crops. Both 2.5-acre cover crop test plots were planted August 22nd and had an average of six inches of cover by September 23rd. The first mix was composed of annual rye grass, crimson clover, Balansa clover, and rapeseed. The second was a cool season mix of annual rye grass, Dixie crimson clover, cover crop radish, dwarf Essex rapeseed, and purple top turnip. Cool season grasses such as annual rye grass or cereal rye can overwinter and protect against wind erosion, scavenge nitrogen from legumes, build organic matter, and provide grazing. Crimson clover and Dixie crimson clover are cool season broadleaf legumes that fix nitrogen and protect against wind erosion. Cool season brassica such as rapeseed and radishes complement mixes by breaking up soil compaction with large taproots, retaining soil moisture over winter, and scavenging soil nitrogen that leach below the crop root zone. These two diverse cover crop mixes increase returns annually by compounding soil health benefits.

The HCWP, Renville County SWCD, and Renville County Water Management have provided a cost-share program the last two years to give farmers financial and technical assistance to develop cover crop programs that work best for their individual land tracts and farming practices. Local interest and experience with cover crops continues to grow with 1,500 acres planted this year in Renville County and the Hawk Creek Watershed (covering portions of Renville, Chippewa, and Kandiyohi Counties).

For more information on cover crops or field day presentations, please contact:

Renville County SWCD

1008 West Lincoln Avenue, Olivia
(320) 523-1559, www.renvillewcd.com

Hawk Creek Watershed Project

Lower Level of Renville County Courthouse, Olivia
(320) 523-3666, www.hawkcreekwatershed.org

“Taking Care of Your Septic System” continued from front

- Do not dispose of paints, medications, or chemicals through your septic system.
- Minimize use of harsh cleaners, bleach, antibacterial soaps, and detergents.
- Keep grease, lint, food, personal wipes, and feminine hygiene products out of your septic system.

Septic Tank

- Never enter the septic tank.
- Have a state-licensed professional maintainer pump/clean solids from the tanks manhole (not the inspection pipes) at least once every three years.
- Have the baffles inspected at the time of cleaning.
- Identify whether your tank has an effluent screen (filter), and service as necessary.
- Do not use septic tank additives or cleaners.

Soil Treatment System (Drainfield)

- Maintain a vegetative cover (turf grass, native grasses, or flowers).
- Keep heavy vehicles off the area, including cars, snowmobiles, ATVs, etc.
- Do not grow vegetables or situate play areas above the soil treatment area.
- To help prevent system freezing:
 - ✓ Inspect for cracked or missing inspection and riser pipes, which can allow cold air into the system.
 - ✓ Let your lawn grow long in the fall over the soil treatment area for added insulation. For newly installed systems, place six to 12 inches of mulch cover over the tank and soil treatment area.
 - ✓ Maintain normal daily water use over the course of the winter.
 - ✓ In addition to vehicles, keep excessive foot traffic away from the system. Compacted soils and snow do not provide insulating qualities and send frost deeper into the ground.

For more information on septic system maintenance or for general septic system questions, visit the University of Minnesota Onsite Sewage Treatment Program’s website at <http://septic.umn.edu/> and refer to “Septic System Owners” or contact the Renville County Environment and Community Development office at (320) 523-3768.



Don’t know what to do with those old or no longer working string of holiday lights? Renville County, along with sponsoring drop sites, will once again be collecting light strings for recycling. The *Recycle Your Holidays* program also accepts electrical cords, such as extension cords or cords from appliances. For collection site locations, please visit: www.renvillecountymn.com or call (320) 523-3760.