



Renville

COUNTY MESSENGER

CONNECTING YOU WITH YOUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Volume 17

Fall 2018

Issue 3

Sheriff's Office Has An Unmanned Aerial Vehicle



to arrive to assist in Renville County. "We needed a better solution," continued Hable.

To help with the costs of acquiring the UAV, Renville County received a \$5,000.00 community grant from Alliance Pipeline. The remainder of the cost was covered using funds from the Sheriff's Office drug forfeiture account. That account is funded when cash or vehicles are seized from drug offenders and it's proven that the cash or property are proceeds of drug trafficking. The significant initial investment included not only the cost of the UAV itself, but also extra batteries, charging stations, controllers, lights, spare parts and most expensive: cameras; including a Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) thermal camera. That camera is similar to those mounted on the State Patrol helicopters, which detect heat and are invaluable when searching for people.

Your Renville County Sheriff's Office is constantly looking for ways to increase efficiency and enhance the delivery of public safety services to our citizens. The recent addition of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) technology is no exception. Perhaps more commonly referred to as a "drone", the Renville County Sheriff's Office was one of the first outstate Sheriff's Offices in Minnesota to develop and launch a UAV program.

Historically, to get a "bird's eye view" of various incidents, the Sheriff's Office has needed to rely on State Patrol aircrafts, which are based in the Twin Cities metro area. "Time is of the essence when we're searching for lost, missing or wanted people," said Renville County Sheriff Scott Hable. It was not uncommon to have to wait up to three hours or more for a State Patrol helicopter

Unlike a drone being flown as a hobby, before the Sheriff's Office UAV could ever leave the ground, special permission, or a Certificate of Authorization, was needed from the FAA. Next, Sheriff's Office staff needed to receive accredited training on subjects including airspace, UAV regulations, air traffic control requirements and standard operating procedures. That training was completed on July 12, 2017. Only eight days later, RCSO deputies flew the first official mission, looking for a lost child. Since that time, several successful missions have been flown, including requests from neighboring counties who don't have this technology to help with various emergencies in their jurisdictions.

To date, the Renville County UAV has aided in searches for missing children, missing adults, providing over watch and other

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

SEE WHATS INSIDE ➔



missions for our regional SWAT team, and was instrumental in locating and apprehending an armed felon who led deputies on a pursuit and then fled on foot into a cornfield.

The Sheriff's Office UAV will fly for only a few reasons: public safety missions including lost or missing persons, suspects at large, assisting fire department or EMS operations or other incidents where people's safety might be jeopardized, training flights and public demonstrations. Absent a court order, the UAV is never flown to gather information or intelligence on a specific person or place.

The UAV program has definitely proven itself to be a very successful and beneficial addition to the Sheriff's Office. "Rest assured that the aircraft and our pilots stand ready at a moment's notice to quickly deploy this technology whenever and wherever it is needed to keep Renville County's residents safe," concluded Sheriff Hable.



Meet Cindy Grosklags, New Human Services Director

Service Administrators (MACSSA). This organization has been very helpful, and she will be attending a 3 day conference on reporting, budgeting, and how to interpret reports. There are regular monthly meetings among Region 6 and 8 directors, and she has found these group meetings as a great resource for her new work.

Including Cindy, there are currently 45 employees in the human services department. Jen Olson was promoted to a Social Service Supervisor, the position that Cindy had held. Renea Weigel is a Social Service Supervisor, Jill Pelzel is a Financial Assistance Supervisor, Lora Waibel is a Child Support Supervisor, and Andrea Prekker is the Fiscal Supervisor and Support Staff Supervisor. The human services department administers the Income Maintenance, Social Services and Child Support programs.

Cindy has found her position very rewarding as her team provides services to people who need it most. "Helping people has been a big part of my job," said Cindy. "Renville County Human Services focuses on serving the communities in Renville County and that helps us to accomplish our work, and provide services to people who are eligible for them," Cindy remarked. "The County Board and County Administration recognizes what we do and are extremely supportive. We spend a significant amount of time in human services helping people remain in their homes and communities. Cindy remarked", I like working in Renville County as they are very

supportive of what we need to accomplish".

"Personally, I believe that we are responsible for all of the people in our communities. The work our team does is to help people in our communities access the resources available to them," Cindy said. "I am fiscally responsible and while managing Human Services it is important to me to get the best value for the dollars we are spending and I want to use our resources prudently to support our department and do the best that we can.", noted Cindy. She has worked many aspects of Human Services over the years including mental illness, developmental delay, chemical dependency, child protection, child and adult welfare, vulnerable adults, adult protection, and licensing foster care and day care homes.

"Since I have worked in Renville County, I have seen several changes including technology advances, new program development, increases in regulations, significant addition of federal dollars to provide services, and more reporting. The changes have been positive but have come with some strings. I have been happy with my career choice to be involved with Human Services and serving people with integrity. I work with dedicated people that make a difference in people's lives. I will use the best of my abilities as a County Director to continue to support the staff here that have made a career in helping others through public service," Cindy concluded.

Cindy Grosklags has worked for Renville County for the past 25 years in the Human Services Department. First as a Social Services Supervisor and now as the Human Services Director. She started her career in Human Services as a Social Worker in surrounding counties including Kandiyohi and Redwood. She received an AA Degree from Willmar Community College, now known as Ridgewater, a Bachelor's Degree from St Cloud State University and finally a Master's Degree from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities Campus.

Since she has been promoted to the Director position, she has been learning about more programs administered by Human Services and has been more involved at the state level, and interpreting policy. As the Director, she finds herself more responsible for budgeting and the impact various programs have on the budget. She is less involved in the day to day activities of the staff as a Director. She gets assistance from her association, the Minnesota Association of County Social

Renville County Now Offers Direct Debit of Your Property Tax Payments!

Renville County now offers direct debit of your property tax payments! This convenient, hassle free payment allows your property tax payment to be automatically deducted from a checking or savings



account at your financial institution on a semi-annual or annual basis. If you are interested in our direct debit option **please contact our office at 320-523-2071** or read and complete the form with required information. Visit the Auditor/Treasurer's page on Renville County's website to view this form.

<http://www.renvillecountymn.com/Auditor/Direct%20Debit%20Authorization%20Application.pdf>

➤ FREEZING FOR FOOD!

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

December 5th, 6th and 7th

- B & D's Grocery Store in Olivia

December 6th:

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

➤ **YOU MAY DONATE CASH OR FOOD.**

RENVILLE COUNTY SALVATION ARMY NEEDS YOUR HELP



DOING THE MOST GOOD

You can help your Renville County Neighbors by:

- Monetary Donations • Volunteer as a Bell Ringer
- Donations made in and assigned to Renville County, are used to help Renville County residents.
- All vouchers are authorized only to Renville County businesses.

Send donations to:

Renville County
Salvation Army
Attn: Crystal or Janet,
105 S 5th St Suite 203H
Olivia, MN 56277

Bell Ringing:

Call Crystal: (320) 523-3525
or Janet: (320) 523-3532.
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0C4BA5A929A2F-C1-redkettle>

We assist Renville County residents who are need of gas vouchers, food, rent, utilities, temporary housing and more.

COUNTY PARKS OPEN for Winter Recreational Activities



Citizens are welcome to enter any of the seven county parks by foot to enjoy hiking, snow shoeing, cross country skiing, bird watching, and fishing as well as any other winter recreational activity. Lake Allie, Skalbekken and Vicksburg parks have designated winter parking areas located inside the parks. **All other county parks will be closed to motorized vehicles from November 1 through April 15, 2019.** 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 by permit only** in Skalbekken, Vicksburg, Beaver Falls, Birch Coulee, Mack Lake, and Anderson Lake County Parks from **November 2nd – December 31st.** If you have any questions regarding use of the parks during the winter and early spring, please contact:

Renville County Division of Parks:
320-523-3747 or email ParksDept@renvillecountymn.com

Talking is Teaching Comes to Renville County

Renville County has launched a campaign to bring awareness to the importance of talking with children. The goal is to raise awareness about the importance of talking, reading, and singing with young children, especially infants and toddlers. It is also to give all adults, especially parents, practical tools to use at home and in the community.

Their campaign is funded for one year by PACT for Families and SW Initiative Foundation. Renville County Public Health is leading the campaign in Renville County.

Research has shown that talking, reading, and singing regularly with a child positively builds their brains and various skills. It also develops social-emotional skills. Children must hear words thousands of times in the early years of life to make the connection between a spoken word and the object or idea it stands for.

Research also shows that children in poverty hear 30 million less words by the time they start kindergarten, than children in middle or high income homes. This puts many kids entering kindergarten at a disadvantage. The number of words you understand when you start kindergarten directly predicts your chances of graduating from high school, the success you might have in college and your future income level. In other words, your starting line on the first day of kindergarten impacts your intellectual and financial success for the rest of your life.

While today's infants and toddlers hear words and songs from film, videos, and games, these models don't offer the same benefits as

do speaking, reading, and singing with them in person. They'll hear the new words through technology, but they miss out on the human connection and opportunity to bond.



Some tips for interactions with infants include as you're feeding a baby using words to describe the foods, cuddling with the baby as you read a book, and singing a favorite song again and again.

Talking is Teaching also has tips for toddlers which include things like playing "I-Spy" in the grocery store, asking questions about a book you're reading together, and singing songs that have basic counting or rhyming patterns.

The campaign will rely heavily on communities and individuals, with a limited budget for promotional items. Public Health encourages any agency, community, and individual to help with the campaign. In particular, businesses and groups such as libraries, churches, schools, daycares, and restaurants are great places for campaigns.

Each county participating will receive two permanent playground signs. Fairfax and Olivia have been chosen to receive the signs. Posters will be placed in each of the ten towns and rotated. Every month a different business in each town will be approached to see if they want a turn displaying the poster.

Each county will be handing out new baby kits. The reusable yellow grocery bags, with a Talking is Teaching prompt on the front, will include various items. Renville County's bags will include three board books, three CDs of 150 toddler songs, a training cup, and registration information for the Imagination Library with which infants can receive one book per month for five years.

The bags are given to every new baby born who resides in Renville County beginning September 1, 2018. The bags will be handed out at the RC Hospital and the Rice Memorial Hospital. If not born at these locations the family will be contacted after the birth to receive their bag.

For more information contact Renville County Public Health (320) 523-2570 or <http://talkingisteaching.org>



500 E. DePue Ave.
Olivia, MN 56277

Phone: 320-523-3710

Email: lisah@renvillecountymn.com

Web site: www.renvillecountymn.com

ECRWSS

Postal Customer

PRSR STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM RETAIL

Put Your Reusable Shopping Bags to Use!



November 1, 2018, will mark the discontinued collection and recycling of film plastics due to the increased costs to provide the recycling program. Examples of film plastics include salt bags, large plastics wrapping for mattresses and box springs, television and stereo sheathing, and plastic shopping bags. Residents and businesses are being asked to dispose of all film plastic materials with their municipal solid waste (garbage). *Residents are encouraged to make a conscious effort to purchase and use reusable shopping bags.* Reusable shopping bags have been around for years. Recently several retailers have made an extra effort to encourage their use by having reusable bags available for purchase at the checkout or by offering a store discount for each reusable bag you bring with you.

Why has it taken so long for the use of reusable shopping bags to catch on?

Many large and small grocery, convenience, and retail stores have made plastic film bags too convenient to accept when purchasing their goods. Film plastic bags are less expensive than paper bags, but they have wreaked havoc on the environment, landfills, and recycling industries for decades. The recycling industry has attempted to recycle and market film plastic with varying degrees of success. Overall, the industry has been passive in its stance against the use of the film plastic and accepts some blame for not strongly discouraging the use of plastic bags.



We are encouraging County residents to do their best to use reusable shopping bags. If you happen to forget to bring your reusable bags with you, ask the store to place purchased items directly in your cart with no bag whenever possible. If plastic bags are the only bags being offered, stop by the service desk or contact a store manager and encourage the retailer to sell reusable shopping bags at the checkout and to offer paper bags.

Counties Make Difficult Decision to End Glass Recycling

It may come as a surprise to Redwood and Renville Counties' residents and businesses that glass containers, an original material of the recycling movement, will **no longer be accepted as recyclable beginning November 1, 2018.** For years, our counties' recycling



programs have gone to great lengths to recycle glass food and beverage containers of all types. *Due to market changes, it has become increasingly difficult and expensive to locate end users for recycled glass.* What was once a highly reusable material has now become a "waste" or a "problem material." Factors such as distance to markets, processing costs, contamination levels, and rising expenses to provide the programs, have led to the decision to discontinue the acceptance of glass.

Beginning November 1st, we request that residents and business discontinue placing glass items into their recycling carts and drop boxes. Glass bottles such as soda, juice, beer, wine, and spirits, as well as assorted food jars, will need to be placed in municipal solid waste (garbage) containers. We recognize that this is a drastic change as Redwood and Renville Counties' residents have been coached for years to recycle glass.

*The Redwood-Renville Regional Solid Waste Authority would like to **thank you** for your past recycling efforts and appreciate your assistance with the current changes.*

Although glass and film plastic (i.e., plastic shopping bags) will no longer be accepted, residents and businesses are encouraged to continue recycling paper, cardboard, plastic containers (Numbered 1-5), and aluminum and steel cans.

RECYCLE Your Holiday Lights



Have you ever wondered what to do with your old or inoperable string of Holiday Lights? Do what many other Renville County Residents did in 2017 and drop them off at one of the many sponsored collection points throughout Renville County. **Last year, county residents recycled over 1,000 pounds (roughly 2 gaylord boxes) of holiday lights.** For packaged and/or unused strings of holiday lights, contact any of your local thrift stores and help light up the holidays for others in your community. *The “Recycle Your Holidays” program also accepts electrical cords, such as extension cords and cords from appliances.*

➤ For collection site locations or other recycling related questions, please visit: www.renvillecountymn.com or call (320) 523-8002



NEW ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROVIDER For Renville County Residents

As of October 1, 2018, United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) will be the new Energy Assistance Program provider in Renville County.

They are committed to providing high quality services at their home office in the Courthouse at 500 East Depue Avenue. *The office will be staffed five days a week.* In early September,

the State mailed out the 2018-2019 Energy Assistance applications to look over your name. **You do not need to contact them unless you did not receive your application by September 30, 2018.**

Once you receive your application, please fill it out and sign/date the back page. **Along with your completed application you will need to send:**

- 1.) Copies of 3 months of your household's income. There is a chart on the application that will explain which three months you need to send.
- 2.) Copies of your current utility bills. This includes both your electric and heating source such as propane, gas, fuel oil, etc.

➤ **Then return your application to UCAP by Dropping it off at our Olivia office, or Mailing it to UCAP, 200 SW 4th St, PO Box 1359, Willmar, MN 56201.**

If you have any questions please call UCAP at Olivia at (320) 523-1842 or at the Willmar office at (320) 235-0850 or toll free at 1-800-992-1710.

Members of the public are now able to self-register to receive automatic notification of meeting agendas via the Register link on the [County Board Meeting portal page](#).

After clicking on the Register link, a box will open up requesting the user's contact information and agenda preferences:



Whenever desired, users can log back into the system to change their agenda elections.



Renville
COUNTY
Service • Stewardship • Shared Responsibility

HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS

105 South 5th Street, Suite 311
Olivia, MN 56277
(320) 523-3656 • www.renville.com

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Business Innovation Grant

The Renville County Economic Development Authority began its Business Innovation Grant (BIG) program in January 2016 as a simple way to assist businesses in Renville County with growth and development opportunities. The grants are small in the scope of most projects, but they are impactful. In the three years since the inception of the program, 38 projects have been supported through the BIG program totaling more than \$76,000 in grants to Renville County businesses. Area recipients have included such industries as dog kennels, salons, chiropractic practices, restaurants, child care facilities, grocery stores, fitness studios, insurance agencies, and auto shops to name a few. The projects that the EDA has had the honor to partner with have included equipment purchases, building renovations and additions, exterior signs, and facade updates. In total, these projects have injected more than \$605,000 dollars into the communities of Renville County and added more than four full-time jobs. Projects with the BIG grant have been completed in eight communities and four townships in Renville County.

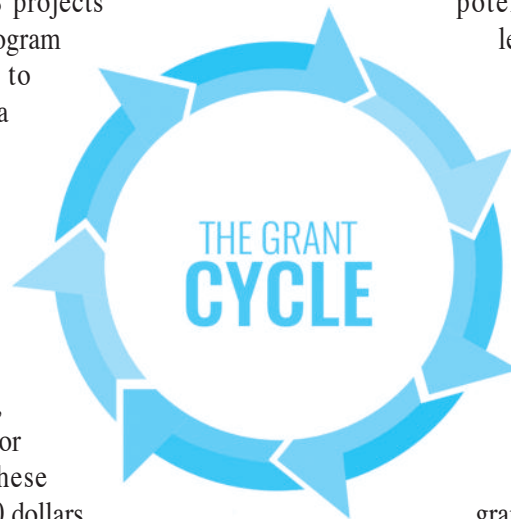
There are four rounds of Business Innovation Grant funding available per year (winter, spring, summer, and fall). Applications

can be submitted at any time during the grant cycle prior to the deadline (January 10, April 10, July 10, and October 10). However, action will be taken at the HRA/EDA Board meetings in January, April, July, and October. This is a competitive application

process where projects will be scored based on need, potential economic impact to Renville County, leveraging of other funds, realism of the project plan, and the ability to use the funds in a timely fashion. The Business Innovation Grants can be used for the following: equipment purchases or upgrades; capital improvements; purchase, construction, renovation, or expansion of buildings; development or promotion of new product lines; commercial blight; professional development or employee training (tuition only); and information technology upgrades.

This is a 1:1 matching grant, maximum grant award in the amount of \$3,000, with the average grant around \$2,000. Applications must be completed electronically and can be found at www.renville.com

under the "Business Incentives" tab or by contacting the EDA at 320-523-3656 or eda@renvillecountymn.com. Staff is happy to learn more about your project and help you navigate this grant and application process. Give the EDA a call today to learn more about the Business Innovation Grant.



Business Retention and Expansion

The Renville County EDA is conducting formal Business Retention and Expansion visits with local businesses. This is a meeting with EDA staff and the business owner and/or manager. We work through a questionnaire and have a conversation about your business. The questionnaire helps facilitate the conversation and identify areas of need where potential partnerships, resources and action can be explored to the benefit of the business. This initial meeting takes about an hour. *This process helps the EDA gain a better understanding of your business along with its current and future needs.* Additionally this structured meeting format will allow the EDA to collect some data, assist with any needed problem solving and help identify potential opportunities for the business. **Staff is scheduling visits now. If you'd like to arrange a time to discuss your business and its future please call the EDA at (320) 523.3656.**

NEWS FROM OUR NEIGHBORS

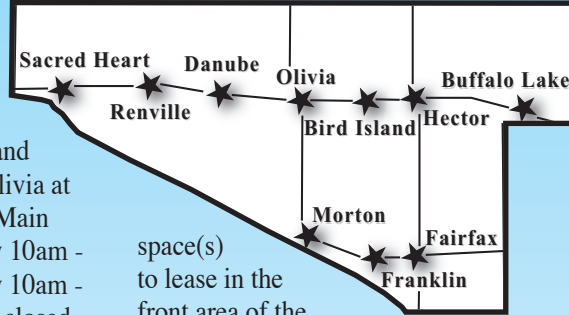
OLIVIA ~

Visit Olivia for the holidays! The Creative Collective is a new boutique store carrying gifts, decor, refurbished goods, and clothing located in downtown Olivia at the corner of Highway 212 and Main Street. Winter hours are Tuesday 10am - 7pm, Wednesday through Friday 10am - 5pm, Saturday 10am - 3pm, and closed Sunday and Monday. You can find us on Facebook to stay up to date on our sales and events. We do baby shower registries, bridal registries, holiday gifts, and more!

Matt Anderson will be playing live at Max's Grill the evening of Wed, November 21st. Holiday Happenings is scheduled for December 6th in downtown Olivia (9th street). There will be music, refreshments, an electric light parade, pictures with Santa, Renville County Christmas Cantata singers concert at St Al's, and more.

FRANKLIN ~

There is a beautiful, new building nearing completion on Second Ave. (main street) in Franklin. The owner has retail/office



space(s) to lease in the front area of the building. If interested, please call: (507) 381-3642.

HECTOR ~

Holiday Happenings November 10th, Bake & Craft Sale 8 - 1 BLHS Hector Campus Old Gym. Unforgettable Christmas December 6th 3:30 - 7:30 new additions plus past favorites, Santa, horse wagon rides and the drawing card. Watch for more details!

BUFFALO LAKE ~

Santa's Breakfast December 1, 2018 10:30-1:00 at the Fire Hall with Santa visiting 11:00-12:30. January 14-19, 2019 Buffalo Lake Winterfest.

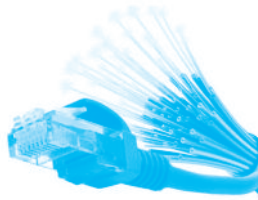
Circle of Excellence Award

Franklin Industries, Inc. and Cedar Mountain Cougar Cub Child Care has received the Minnesota Department of Human Services 2018 Commissioner's Circle of Excellence Award:

Franklin Industries Inc. was started to address the need for affordable child care in the community. The company sold stock in its organization to build community ownership and secured public and private financing for purchasing land and building a child care center. The collaborative efforts of Franklin Industries and Cedar Mountain Schools led to the opening of the Cougar Cub Child Care Center in December 2016. The early learning center for ages 6 weeks to school-age aims to provide children with social, emotional, physical and cognitive opportunities that allow them to develop to their fullest potential. The center works with Parent Aware and uses curriculum that aligns with Minnesota's early learning standards.

RS Fiber Project Update

Work on the project is to continue with the portion north of Sacred Heart on Hwy 11 to just south of Sacred Heart and from Fairfax to approximately 7 miles north of Franklin. **Customers along the route will be notified once services are nearly ready.** We are currently providing services in the Lake Allie and Lake Preston area of the project. **Our Air service is ready and being installed around Hector and Bird Island, please call 1-800-628-1754 to schedule a site spec if you are interested in services.**



Centennial Apartment

Units NOW AVAILABLE!

To inquire about apartments contact the Renville County HRA at **(507) 637-4004**



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	\$61,875
2 people	\$70,744
3 people	\$79,613
4 people	\$88,413
5 people	\$95,494
6 people	\$102,575
7 people	\$109,656



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



Water Protection and Management

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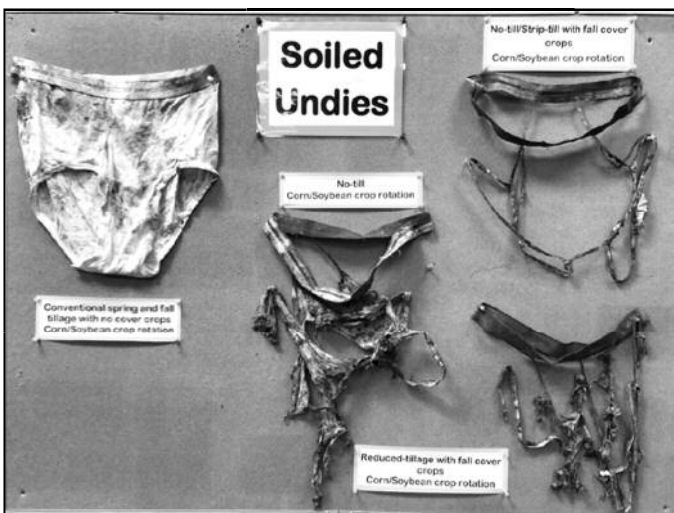
Issue 3

Reduced Tillage and Cover Crop Field Day

Submitted by Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

The Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Hawk Creek Watershed Project (HCWP) held a Reduced Tillage and Cover Crop Field Day on September 14, 2018. The meeting began at the Renville Community Center with Heidi Rauenhorst, HCWP Coordinator, welcoming producers. She was followed by guest speaker David Mettler from the Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative, who presented information on cover crop test plots. David discussed the trials of using cover crops following fall harvest to prevent winter erosion and also provided insight as to future test plots he would like to perform.

Holly Hatlewick, District Manager from the Renville County SWCD, ended the morning presentations by talking about soil health and methods to develop healthy soil. Holly also showed two time-lapse videos of cover crops inter-seeded into corn and into soybean row crops. The videos captured the growing season from spring seeding to September 7, 2018, and demonstrated how cover crops can grow and thrive in different growing environments and not compete with row crop growth and yield. Her presentation was wrapped up by undies; you read that right, undies! Holly and a Conservation Corp MN intern buried cotton underwear, which is an organic material, 11 weeks prior to the meeting and then dug them up a couple of days before the meeting.



"Reduced Tillage and Cover Crop Field Day" continued on back



Unwanted Medication? What to do with unused or expired drugs.

Expired or unwanted over-the-counter or prescription medications have traditionally been disposed of by flushing them down the toilet or sink. Studies show that this can cause contamination to our lakes and streams as most municipal wastewater treatment systems cannot remove medications from the wastewater. This can be harmful to fish and other aquatic wildlife, as well as a problem for our own drinking water quality. However, keeping unused medication in the home can result in accidental poisoning of children or having the medication misused, abused, or stolen.

Rather than "flushing," Renville County residents can safely dispose of unused or expired prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, animal drugs, and illegal drugs at a medication disposal box. A disposal box is located in the lobby of the main entrance to the Renville County Government Services Center in Olivia and is available 24 hours a day. Disposal is free. The medicine should be kept in the original container. Remove the person's name and other personal information, but leave the name of the drug and other content information on the bottle or package.

For information on other disposal locations in Renville County, please contact the Renville County Sheriff's Department at (320) 523-1161.

Low-Interest Loan Programs for Well and Septic Improvements

Renville County administers several low-interest loan programs to assist property owners with upgrading or replacing a failing septic system or loan funds for repairing or replacing a damaged, noncompliant, or contaminated well. Loan terms



"Low-Interest Loan Programs" continued on back

Four pairs of underwear were on display showing the difference between 1) conventional spring and fall tillage with no cover crops on a corn/soybean crop rotation, 2) no-till corn/soybean rotation, 3) no-till/strip-till with fall cover crops on a corn/soybean crop rotation, and 4) reduced tillage with fall cover crops on a corn/soybean crop rotation. Holly explained the impact of biological activity in the healthy soil by the appearance of each pair of underwear. The conventional spring and fall tillage cotton underwear were hardly affected, showing minimal beneficial biological activity with few holes in the underwear. No-till on corn/soybean crop rotation had about half of the underwear left over. No-till/strip-till with fall cover crop underwear only had the bands left. Reduced tillage with fall cover crops had the bands and a little bit of material left. Less cotton means soils are full of millions of tiny lifeforms—bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes, arthropods, earthworms—all busy transferring nutrients by eating and decomposing organic material, in this case the underwear, through nutrient cycling in processes that help plants thrive.



Attendees boarded buses and were taken to different sites where producers have been utilizing cover crops and reduced tillage practices. At the first site, each attendee was given a wire flag to push into the ground as far as they were able. At about 6", the flags could not go in any further. Holly explained that the soil was compacted, making it difficult for crop roots to travel below that 6" point. The landowner of this field is beginning to use cover crops and reduced tillage practices to help reduce his compaction.

On the way to the next site, Holly and Dean Dambrotten, HCWP Technician, pointed out several sites that producers have been using cover crops. One of the sites was a field that after harvest last year, the producer seeded cereal rye. This spring the producer planted his soybeans directly into the green growing rye grass and after the soybeans emerged he sprayed to terminate the rye. The producer noted that by using a cover crop he had uniform soybean emergence and the rye grass protected the young seedlings from spring storm and hail events. The rye grass

also helped with weed control.

Turnips, radishes, sunflowers, rape, annual rye grass, cow peas, buckwheat, kale, and others were seeded at the last site. With all the cover crops seeded in the field, it was a perfect site to view a soil pit. The pit was 40" deep and the roots went down 30", which was impressive since the cover crop had only been growing for eight weeks. Because the soil was healthy, mycorrhizal fungi were present in the soil along with deep earthworm activity in the soil profile. Holly gave a presentation using the rainfall simulator to illustrate the importance of a healthy soil structure created through the use of reduced tillage and cover crops. Following the presentation, attendees were able to look at reduced tillage equipment located on site.



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



Renville County SWCD

1008 West Lincoln Avenue, Olivia

(320) 523-1559 • www.renvilleswcd.com

"Low-Interest Loan Programs" continued from front

are for 10 years with an interest rate of 3%. The loan amount is added to property taxes as a special assessment with payments due twice a year with property taxes. Loans for already completed repairs or installations or new building sites are not eligible. The application process is simple, and the loan can be paid in full at any time.

For more information on low-interest septic or well loans, please contact Renville County Environmental Services at (320) 523-3768.

MINNESOTA RUNOFF RISK ADVISORY FORECAST

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the National Weather Service has designed a new tool for those applying manure in Minnesota. The interactive map is designed to help farmers and applicators decide on the optimal time to apply manure by predicting when runoff events are likely to occur. For more information, visit: www.mda.state.mn.us and search, "Runoff Risk Advisory Forecast".