



News and Highlights

4th Quarter 2024

www.co.beltrami.mn.us

Beltrami County Mission and Values: We will strive to be the catalyst to firmly establish a community that promotes healthy families, environmental quality, expanding economic opportunity and a quality of life second to none.

So What's the New Jail Going to Cost?

As most folks know, the County committed to building a new jail to replace the current jail which does not meet Minnesota Department of Corrections standards or space requirements. In November of 2023, voters overwhelmingly approved a referendum to finance the project by creating a new sales and use tax. Since that time the County has been working on the design of the new facility (which will be located at 815 Pioneer Street SE). With design wrapping up several months ago, it was time to bid the project.

The County hired, through a competitive RFP process, Kraus Anderson (KA) as its Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR). The CMAR process is an arrangement where the County and the Construction Manager negotiate a guaranteed maximum price (GMP) for the cost of the construction during the design phase. The benefit is that the construction manager will be responsible for any costs that exceed that amount, and the County will recoup any savings below that amount. KA just completed the bidding process and the County successfully negotiated a GMP for the project of \$62,647,616 – which is about \$5M under the project estimate. Because the project includes doing something with the old Jail (which has yet to be determined), the savings will be earmarked for addressing the old facility. Construction is officially slated to begin on the new jail in April 2025. The project will take about 24 months to construct which puts completion of the new facility near the Spring of 2027.

~Submitted by: County Administrator, Tom Barry

Ceremonial Groundbreaking

Beltrami County held a ceremonial groundbreaking for the new Jail on September 25, 2024, at 815 Pioneer Street SE, the site where the new facility will be constructed. While significant construction isn't scheduled to start until the Spring of 2025, the groundbreaking highlighted the milestone of completion of significant planning efforts over the last several years.



The ceremony opened with a land acknowledgement by Public Information Officer Christopher Muller, acknowledging and honoring the Ojibwe and Dakota people who were the original stewards of the land where the facility will be constructed. Sheriff's Office Chaplain Paul Rose provided an opening invocation. County Administrator Tom Barry provided information on the process of community input and development of the project. County Board Chair John Carlson thanked the voters who approved a local sales tax to fund the project as well as the Fankhanel Family for their generous donation of the land. Sheriff Jason Riggs stressed the importance of the new facility to improve the safety of staff and inmates, as well as improving the quality of life in a modern facility that will meet the County's future needs.

Beltrami County officials were joined by representatives from other local governments, including the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. Chairman Faron Jackson Senior shared the significance of working together to reduce the Indigenous populations that are incarcerated and receiving fair treatment. Beltrami County was deliberate in engaging neighboring entities and those that will also use the facility, including the Leech Lake Tribal Police Department. Expanding services and programming centered on reducing recidivism was a theme among all speakers.

Following remarks, County elected officials, staff, and other elected officials donned reflective safety vests, hard hats, grabbed a golden shovel and tossed dirt concluding the groundbreaking to a round of applause. Those present were thanked for attending and to leave in a safe, healing, and meaningful way.

The current Beltrami County Jail has become antiquated and is difficult to comply with Department of Corrections standards and mandates. The number of inmates that are allowed to be incarcerated has been reduced so significantly nearly half of the Beltrami County Inmates are housed out of county at a tremendous cost to the taxpayers. The jail also has one of the highest rates of inmate-on-staff assaults in Minnesota. The new facility is designed for more efficient operations, a safer environment for staff and inmates, and allows expanded opportunities for award winning programming.

~Submitted by: Emergency Management Director/PIO, Christopher Muller

Bemidji Regional Airport Custom Zoning Ordinance

The Bemidji Regional Airport is excited to announce that a new custom zoning ordinance has been adopted.

Airport zoning exists to establish Land Use Safety Zones that restrict any incompatible land uses that may be hazardous to operational safety of aircraft. In addition to protecting aircraft, these zones provide a level of safety to people on the ground near the airport as well as property in the vicinity of the airfield. Prior to adoption of the new ordinance, the Bemidji Regional Airport had a zoning ordinance in place that was not necessarily the best fit for our community. The State of Minnesota had a template for airport zoning that laid out specifically where these safety zones should fall as well as what the restrictions would be in these zones. Restrictions on building or tower heights, lot sizes, and occupancies were generally more stringent closer to the end of a runway and became less stringent as the distance from a runway end increased.

Implementing a standard zoning template worked well for airports that lie further outside of town and have a larger buffer zone between airport runways and areas of development. The City of Bemidji has grown substantially on its Northwest side over the last 25 years, growing much closer to the airport and at times creating conflict with the Land Use Zone restrictions. Planning officials in the community were repeatedly put in the tough position of having to balance the needs of the community against the requirements of airport zoning. In 2007, as a result of variances to airport zoning being passed, Bemidji Airport's Runway 13/31 had to be shifted approximately 1000 feet to the Northwest to increase the buffer area between the runway and new development. Despite the runway relocation and the airport zones moving, airport zoning restrictions continued to limit development near the airport and variance requests continued. It was apparent that the zoning that was in place was not a good fit for the community.

In 2019, the Minnesota Legislature revised its Airport Land Use statute and the Minnesota Department of Transportation Department of Aeronautics created a process that allows communities to create custom Land Use Safety Zones that reflect the unique environment around each airport. In 2022 a Joint Airport Zoning Board (JAZB) was established with the purpose of drafting a new custom zoning ordinance to fit the specific needs of our airport and the community. A JAZB consists of a member from each municipality affected by airport zoning that opts in to participate. The JAZB has met continually from 2022 to 2024. First, the JAZB collaborated to draw new outlines for the Land Use zones. Outlines were drawn to follow property lines wher-

ever possible. The previous zoning outlines were straight lines that cut many properties in half, resulting in many properties having to consider up to 3 different sets of restrictions. Next, the JAZB worked with MnDOT Aeronautics to address comments received regarding the initial ordinance. In May 2024, a public hearing was held to allow members of the public to comment on the draft ordinance. These comments were considered and addressed if necessary. Resolutions of support were passed by JAZB Member Organizations, and in June 2024 a final draft ordinance was submitted to MnDOT Aeronautics for review. State Statute afforded MnDOT a 90 day window to review and respond to the ordinance submittal, and in August 2024 the custom zoning ordinance was approved, making Bemidji only the second community in the State of Minnesota to successfully navigate the custom airport zoning process.

Airport Zoning at a Glance

Safety Zone 1, aside from existing uses, shall contain no buildings, temporary structures, exposed transmission lines, or other similar above-ground land use structural hazards and no uses that will attract an assembly of persons.

Safety Zone 2, aside from existing uses, shall contain no institutions of religious assembly, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, other places of similar use. No daycares of more than 14 children or vulnerable adults are allowed.

Safety Zone H, aside from existing uses, shall contain no structures greater than 75 feet to protect helicopter traffic between the airport and the hospital.

To view the full ordinance as well as a map showing zone boundaries, visit Bemidjiairport.org/zoning.

The Bemidji Airport would like to extend its gratitude to all JAZB members (Beltrami County, City of Bemidji, Eckles Township, Northern Township, Grant Valley Township, and Bemidji Township) as well as their representatives who attended and participated in JAZB meetings for their time and effort. Thanks are also due to the partners that helped us through the process: Representatives from MnDOT Aeronautics who listened in and provided input during JAZB meetings, and consultants at Karvakko and RS&H that guided JAZB members and Airport Staff.

~Submitted by: Bemidji Regional Airport Authority Executive Director, Kyle Christiansen

Beltrami County Solid Waste

City of Blackduck Recycling Site

The City of Blackduck Recycling Site located at 99 Railroad Ave. has not moved. The loose collection containers were removed and a compactor was added to improve site operations.

Since the look of the site has changed, residents have called asking why the recycling site was removed, and/or drive to the Bemidji Transfer Station to drop off their recyclables.

This site is for Single Sort Recycling, and lithium/rechargeable battery collection. Alkaline batteries can be placed in your trash (non-burn).

Please read all the signs located at the site and be aware of the rules of use.

If you make a mess, please clean it up, these are self-service sites. If there is an operational issue, please contact the Solid Waste Operations Coordinator at 218-333-8187.

~ Submitted by: Solid Waste Director, Brian Olson



Clip and Mail

Your opinion and feedback is important to us... tell us how you feel and return this clip to:

Beltrami County Administration
701 Minnesota Ave NW
Bemidji, MN 56601

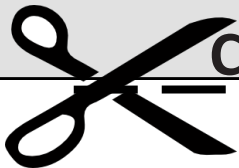
OR e-mail to: webmaster@co.beltrami.mn.us

1. Did you find the information in this Newsletter helpful?

2. What would you like to see in future issues of the Beltrami County News and Highlights?

3. A question I have of the County Board is:

4. A suggestion I have for the County Board is:



Clip and Send

Marriage Ceremony Services Now Offered at the License Center

License Center officiants are now performing civil marriage ceremonies by appointment in the county administration building. The ceremony lasts approximately five to fifteen minutes at a cost of \$50.00, payable at the license center prior to the ceremony.

What are the requirements to have a ceremony?

- You must bring a Minnesota marriage license. You can apply for the license at the License Center prior to the ceremony or if applying the same day, allow an additional 30 minutes before your scheduled ceremony for the application process.
- Both parties must bring their valid, government issued photo ID and be over the age of 18.
- You must bring two witnesses, age 16 or older, that have a valid ID. The witnesses will be signing the marriage license.
- Six guests are allowed to join you for the ceremony.
- All parties including guests may not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The License Center Staff reserves the right to cancel the ceremony if parties appear to be under the influence.
- You will need to arrive at the License Center at least 15 minutes prior to your scheduled ceremony time to fill out additional ceremony paperwork and make payment for the ceremony.
- You must be present at your scheduled time, or the ceremony may be canceled.
- A certified copy of the marriage certificate will be provided after the completion of the ceremony. This certified copy is included with the cost of the marriage license. Additional copies may be purchased for a fee of \$9.00 each.

For questions or reservations, call 218-333-4148 or email beltrami.licensecenter@co.beltrami.mn.us

~Submitted by: License Center Division Director, Leala Roth

Are You REAL ID Ready?

License/ID Comparison Chart

On May 7, 2025, U.S. travelers must be REAL ID compliant to board domestic flights and access certain federal facilities. In Minnesota there are three types of Driver's Licenses and ID cards: Standard, REAL ID, and Enhanced. See the chart comparing the privileges of each type of card.

You can pre-apply on line, visit REALID.dps.mn.gov, or contact the Beltrami County License Center at 218-333-4148. Real & Enhanced ID & Driver's License Applications are accepted until 3:45pm daily.

Information	Real ID	Standard	Enhanced
Valid for lawful driving privileges	✓	✓	✓
Valid for identification purposes	✓	✓	✓
Can be used for domestic air travel	✓		✓
Can be used to access federal facilities such as military bases and nuclear power plants	✓		✓
Issued to applicants 16 years or older	✓	✓	✓
Issued to applicants under 16	✓	✓	
Issued to US citizens	✓	✓	✓
Issued to non-US citizens	✓	✓	
Can be used as a US border crossing document			✓
Additional \$15.00 fee			✓



Beltrami County Public Health MN State Opioid Funding Update

Recent Happenings

On October 15, 2024, the Beltrami County Opioid Steering Committee held their annual community and municipality meeting. For those that were unable to attend, the information is available on the County website.

The *Power Point* can be reviewed here:

<https://www.co.beltrami.mn.us/services/public-health/opioid-steering-committee/>

The meeting can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyARmOznGVw>

Local Statistics

Data from 2018 -2022 shows that Beltrami County had a 5-year average of 53.6 Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) related hospital visits per 1,000, which is by far the highest rate in the State. Birth outcomes and childhood mortality is the number one indicator of the overall health of a community. The Committee understands the importance of all remediation categories but is also aware of urgency in looking upstream. In 2020, data showed Minnesota having an overdose death rate of 17.6 per 100,000. This rate is more than double the state and national averages. Even more shocking was the overdose rate for the Native American population within our community. According to Census data from 2021, 9,198 people that identified as Native American live in Beltrami County, making up 22.2% of the total population. In 2022, Native American's made up 75% of the fatal overdoses that occurred.

On the Horizon for 2025

Moving forward, the county residents can expect to see the second Release for Proposal (RFP) application open in January of 2025, providing organizations with the opportunity to apply for funding. In addition, the committee is supporting a Substance Use and Recovery Campaign focused on education, decreasing stigmas, and raising community awareness. This campaign will have an emphasis on the impact substance use has on infants during pregnancy and after delivery.

The committee is committed to thoughtful planning and strategic use of the funding to ensure that it is used to make a lasting difference on the catastrophic impacts opioids has had and continues to have on all ages, zip codes, races, genders, and socioeconomic statuses of Beltrami County. The committee knows that every resident of Beltrami has been impacted by the opioid epidemic and uses discernment with a goal to move the needle on data in a positive direction.

The Committee is grateful for the opportunity to serve our county. Please reach out with questions or input to amy.bowles@co.beltrami.mn.us

Amy Bowles, RN, BSN, MSN, PHN

Public Health Division Director and Community Health Board Administrator
MN State Opioid Funds, Beltrami County Chief Strategist



Bemidji Area Service Collaborative

The BASC mission is to improve the wellbeing of Beltrami County children, youth, and families through collaboration of our resources and services.

BASC was established in 1994 with a Family Service Collaborative Implementation grant from the State of Minnesota.

BASC models what happens when entities set aside competition for scarce resources and focus on what can be done with shared resources.

BASC establishes and supports programs that are aligned with two Board-established priority areas: Mental Health and Educational Success. Revenue for the agency's integrated fund is generated from grants, Local Collaborative Time Study funds, county funding, state funding, and partner contributions.

Every July, BASC has an application process for integrated funding for programs that serve Beltrami County children, youth, and families.

BASC uses the integrated fund and a grant from the State of Minnesota Office of Justice Programs to provide Diversion programming to youth referred by the County's Attorney Office and area schools for an alternative response to court. BASC has two attendance support programs funded through the integrated fund, Bemidji School District #31, and a grant from the State of Minnesota Office of Justice Program. The Attendance Support Case Manager is located at the Bemidji Middle School and works with youth and families regarding chronic absenteeism. The Engagement Case Manager meets with children and their families to provide support and resources to increase school attendance at J.W. Smith and Gene Dillon Elementary Schools.

Beltrami County Health and Human Services contracts with BASC to manage the Respite grant funded by Minnesota Department of Human Services. Respite funds may include planned respite, community and school-based activities, transportation costs, camp experiences, and other DHS approved expenditures that build protective factors for the child and family.

BASC aspires to strengthen relationships, improve communication, and build trust among partners, programs and the communities served. If you have any questions or comments for BASC, please contact: Kim Graham, BASC Executive Director, 616 America Ave NW Ste 160, Bemidji, MN. 218-333-8194 email: kima@beltrami.org

~Submitted by: BASC Executive Director, Kim Graham

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Beltrami County Housing Trust Fund is Making Progress

In August 2023, the Beltrami County Board of Commissioners took a significant step to address the county's housing challenges by establishing the Beltrami County Housing Trust Fund. This fund is designed to assist lower-income individuals in obtaining and retaining stable housing, as well as to stimulate the development of new housing options for moderate, low, and very low-income residents. The initiative reflects a commitment to enhancing the availability of affordable housing and fostering community growth.

Local Housing Trust Funds are a valuable tool for communities, providing a dedicated revenue stream for housing support and development. These funds offer a flexible and reliable resource, allowing local governments to tailor housing solutions to meet community needs. By leveraging both public and private investments, these trust funds play a crucial role in initiating projects that generate economic growth and create jobs, while addressing critical housing shortages.

Per state guidelines, a non-profit entity can oversee the administration of local housing trust funds. In late 2023, Beltrami County released a Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify an organization to manage the local trust. United Way of the Bemidji Area was selected for this role and is currently in the early stages of planning the distribution of funds.

In an exciting recent development, the Housing Trust Fund opened an RFP for housing programs, including supportive services. These proposals are currently under review by the Housing Trust Fund Cabinet. This is a critical step in identifying projects that will make a meaningful impact in the community by expanding housing opportunities and providing essential services for those in need.

The Beltrami County Housing Trust Fund is positioned to support innovative projects that combine different funding streams to maximize the impact on the county's housing landscape. The flexibility of the trust allows for contributions from various sources, enabling a more comprehensive approach to addressing local housing challenges. The Housing Trust Fund will be opening an RFP for housing development projects in late 2024.

For more information about the Beltrami County Housing Trust Fund, please reach out to:

- **Anne Lindseth** | Email: Anne.lindseth@co.beltrami.mn.us
Phone: 218-333-4195
- **Halen Groenke** | Email: halen@unitedwaybemidji.org
Phone: 218-444-8929

~Submitted by: Anne Lindseth, Director of Beltrami County Health & Human Services

Federal High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program

Beltrami County has been accepted in to the federal High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program established by the United States Congress in 1988. The program is overseen by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) with the goal to strengthen federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement partnerships to address regional drug threats with the purpose of reducing drug trafficking and money laundering operations in the United States.

The HIDTA Program oversees 33 regional HIDTAs in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia. Beltrami County is a member of the North Central HIDTA region, which now includes 9 counties in the State of Minnesota and 8 counties in the State of Wisconsin.

A twenty-page petition requesting the county designation was submitted to the ONDCP earlier this year using statistics from the Paul Bunyan Drug Task Force that showed a dramatic increase in drug seizures over recent years. Additionally, over 30 letters of support were included in the submission from local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, peer support and treatment programs, local, state and federal elected officials, Beltrami County Health and Human Services, Bemidji Area Schools, Bemidji State University Public Safety, Boys and Girl Club of Bemidji, City of Bemidji and United Way of Bemidji Area.

The petition outlined the extent to which the Beltrami area has become a center of illegal drug production, manufacturing, importation, or distribution; the extent to which state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies have committed resources to respond to the drug trafficking problem in the

area, thereby indicating a determination to respond aggressively to the problem; the extent to which drug-related activities in the area are having a significant, harmful impact in the area and in other areas of the country. Lastly, the extent to which a significant increase in the allocation of Federal resources is necessary to respond adequately to the drug-related activities in the area.

The HIDTA program will bring additional federal funds to Beltrami County to investigate, disrupt, and dismantle criminal organizations effecting our communities. These types of investigations have grown increasingly complex with the evolution of technology. Therefore, law enforcement will receive case support through a HIDTA Investigative Support Center (ISC). Law enforcement will also be connected with HIDTA national intelligence centers to more efficiently receive and share information throughout the country.

All law enforcement agencies operating within Beltrami County will work together to develop initiatives under the HIDTA program, which will be managed by the Paul Bunyan Drug Task Force.

~Submitted by: Sgt David Hart, Paul Bunyan Drug Task Force Commander



2025 SWCD Tree Program

The Beltrami County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has officially opened the annual 2025 Tree Sale! Through the tree sale, the SWCD sells young tree and shrub seedlings in bundles of 25. All trees and shrubs are bare root seedlings. In addition, we are selling native wildflowers and grass mixes!

Orders are filled on a first come/first serve basis, so be sure to place your order soon! Orders will be taken until the spring of 2025 and then will be available to be picked up May 1st and 2nd of 2025 at 2115 23rd St. NW, Bemidji (the old Beltrami County Fairgrounds behind Target).

Please fill out the 2025 tree order form found at our website at www.beltramiswcd.org or stop by the office at 701 Minnesota Avenue Suite 113. If you have any questions, please call Claire Hansen at 218-333-4141.

Ice Fishing on the Horizon

Early sunsets, frigid temperatures and flying snow is a sure-fire way to get anglers excited for the 2024-25 ice fishing season on upper Red Lake. Beltrami Soil & Water and Upper Red Lake Area Association want to remind you to plan to properly dispose of your trash and human waste this season.

In 2023 Minnesota legislators passed the “Keep It Clean Law” that made it illegal to place garbage and human waste on or under the ice in Minnesota lakes. This includes garbage, rubbish, cigarette filters, dead animals, litter, and sewage. A \$100 civil penalty will be enforced for each violation. Here are six things to remember when heading out on the lake this winter:

- Make a plan for trash and waste removal before you hit the ice.
- Use colored garbage bags to make waste more visible on the ice.
- Do not place garbage and waste on or under the ice.
- Make sure your garbage is secure before departing.
- Remove all materials when moving a fish house.
- Report violators to help preserve access to the lake.

The Keep It Clean (KIC) Coalition is working hard to make waste disposal easier for anglers. We’ve partnered with Red Lake resort owners to provide dumpsters for human waste. We’re supporting Lake Associations and Soil & Water Districts across the state in coordinating their own Keep It Clean initiative. Additionally, we are actively working on **Keep It Clean 2.0** legislation to secure funding to improve waste management and water quality in Beltrami County lakes.

Keep It Clean accomplishments in Beltrami County include:

- Reached over 13,000 people at the St. Paul ice fishing show and the Minnesota State Fair.
- 23 tons of garbage hauled away from upper Red Lake for proper disposal.
- Distributed 15,000 waste bags to ice anglers.
- 53 SWCD’s and Lake Associations have become KIC partners.



Beltrami Soil & Water and the Upper Red Lake Area association wishes you an exciting and safe ice fishing season!

Please reach out to alec.wilcox@co.beltrami.mn.us with any Keep It Clean related messages.

Winter Park Activities

As the chill returns to the air, the familiar call of winter is upon us in Beltrami County. After a non-snow event last year, a lot of people will be excited to finally get out to enjoy recreating this winter in Beltrami County Parks:

Cross-Country Skiing: Movil Maze Recreation Area and Three Island Park both offer large networks of cross-country ski trails that bring scenery and skill to your skiing experience. Whether you are a beginner or a skilled skier, you can find your trails within the Beltrami County Parks. All ski trail grooming and maintenance is done by the Bemidji Area Cross Country Ski Club through the MNDNR Grant-In-Aid (GIA) program. Funding to maintain trails comes from the sale of the Ski Pass, which is required for cross-country skiers 16 years and older, and can be purchased online, by phone, or in person anywhere that sells MNDNR permits or licenses. Grooming updates and trail conditions can be found on **Skiwise**, which is available online or as an app for your smart phone. Maps, rules, and other information can be found on the website at www.co.beltrami.mn.us.

Ice Fishing: Spend the day ice fishing at Grant Lake or Three Island Lake. Grant Lake can be accessed through two locations at Rognlien Park, at the designated boat launch and through the gate in the southwest corner of the park. At Three Island Park, lake access is through the boat launch area.

Multi-Use Trails: All groomed cross-country ski trails are strictly for skiing except for the Orange and Gold Trail at the north trailhead of Three Island Park. These trails, which are designated as non-motorized multi-use trails, are open to walking, skiing, snowshoeing, fat-tire biking, and skijoring. ***These are the only groomed trails where pets are allowed.***

Relaxing: After a day out on the trails, take a breather at one of the shelter buildings at Three Island Park or Movil Maze. These shelters are open to the public as a warming house during the winter recreation season (December 1 – April 1). Each shelter has a wood stove and picnic tables, so you can warm up, take a rest, prepare some food, or just visit with others. It is an ideal spot for family and friends to gather after a fun day out in the snow.

Snowshoeing: A signed and packed snowshoe trail is located at Three Island Park. It traverses 2.3 miles along the banks of the Turtle River allowing you to meander along with the peaceful river. Nearby at Movil Maze Recreation Area, the mountain bike trails are also available for snowshoeing. ***Snowshoeing is not allowed on any designated ski trails.***

Snowmobiling: Hundreds of miles of snowmobile trails are available throughout the County if you feel the need for a little more speed. Trails are groomed by the North Country Snowmobile Club through the GIA program. Maps and trail conditions are reported at the MNDNR website at www.dnr.state.mn.us/snow_depth/index.html

Have fun, stay warm, stay safe, and enjoy all the recreational activities this winter season has to offer in Beltrami County Parks!

Ice Safety Awareness

As winter approaches, Beltrami County Sheriff Jason Riggs is urging winter enthusiasts and residents to be cautious when it comes to being out on area lakes and bodies of water, particularly in light of last year's incidents and ice rescues.

Last winter, Beltrami County experienced dozens of incidents related to unsafe ice conditions. November, December, and January were unseasonably warm and created unpredictable ice thickness, leading to reports of vehicles breaking through the ice and ice flows moving off main sheets of ice on popular fishing spots like Upper Red Lake, Lake Bemidji, and Lake Movil. Fortunately, there were no fatalities, but these incidents served as stark reminders of the inherent dangers posed by winter recreation and cost tax payers tens of thousands of dollars to respond to.

As a result of numerous ice rescues in the State of Minnesota the 93rd Minnesota Legislature passed HF3796 / 86B.1065 County Sheriff Costs for Unsafe Ice Search and Rescue. Starting in 2025 Minnesota Sheriffs can be reimbursed for 50% of costs associated with an ice rescue or recovery up to \$5000.

According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), safe ice is typically at least four inches thick for walking, five to seven for snowmobiles and small all-terrain vehicles, at least nine to twelve inches thick for cars, and thirteen to seventeen for trucks. However, fluctuating temperatures, currents, wind, rain, and even the weight of snow can compromise ice integrity. Last year's conditions highlighted the need for continuous vigilance among ice-goers. Remember, Ice is never 100% safe.

There are a number of steps that can be taken to reduce risks on the ice. First, contact resorts, area guides, and bait shops for updates on ice conditions on a particular body of water. Second, carry self-rescue equipment with you i.e., float coat, ice spud, ice picks, whistle, and a rope. Don't forget to check ice thickness often. Tell people where you are going and when you will return. Never cross open water from one ice mass to another ice mass even if there is a makeshift bridge. Wind will shift and move ice around potentially creating a larger open body of water.

Please enjoy Beltrami County's natural resources responsibly. Remember, when you take unnecessary risk for yourself you are putting first responders lives at risk when we have to rescue you from the ice or water.

~Submitted by: Sheriff Jason Riggs

Winter Fire Safety

As we transition to the colder months, there is a noticeable increase in home fire occurrences. There are a number of factors contributing to the increase in home fires, primarily people being indoors more, participating in holiday traditions, and increasing efforts to keep homes warm. Conducting an annual review and identifying potential hazards can mitigate fire dangers in your home.

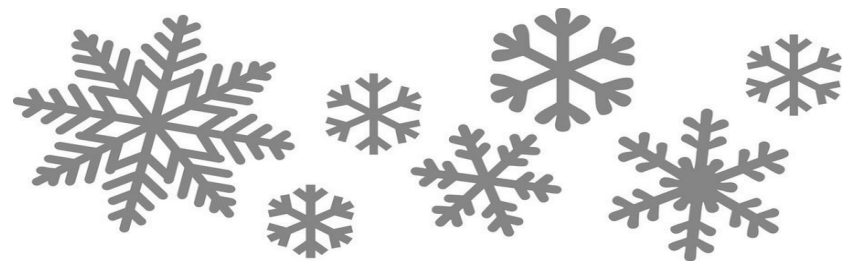
Cooking is usually the leading cause of residential fires, whether it is a family gathering meal being prepared or leaving appliances unattended. Make sure combustible materials such as towels and food boxes are kept away from the stove. Do not leave appliances on that aren't intended to be used for longer periods of time. Keep a fire extinguisher close and remember if an oil or grease fire starts, do not throw water on it. Cover it up and smother the flame.

Another common cause of home fires are holiday decorations like candles and holiday lights. If you are burning candles, keep them away from combustible materials and never leave them burning unattended. If you have children or pets, keep them out of reach. Keep decorations away from fireplaces, heating sources and other ignition sources. Do not overload your electrical outlets with excessive amounts of lights, know the load they can safely handle. If you have a real Christmas tree, keep it watered daily. If it becomes dry, it can erupt into an inferno very quickly.

Install smoke detectors on every floor of your home and in every bedroom. Test smoke detectors to ensure they are functioning. Most fire deaths occur in the home, making it the most dangerous place to be with regard to fire. If you have a fireplace, have it cleaned and serviced. Only burn clean fireplace wood. Keep a sturdy screen or glass closure in front of the fireplace. Do not use alternative heat sources such as grills, which are not only a fire hazard, but can also produce poisonous gasses.

Ice fishing is a popular hobby in Beltrami County. If you are using an enclosed ice shelter or fish house, use the same considerations. Keep portable propane tanks and hoses away from the heating element. Ice houses are often small, making it easier for accidents to happen. Keep your shelter vented and install a carbon monoxide detector.

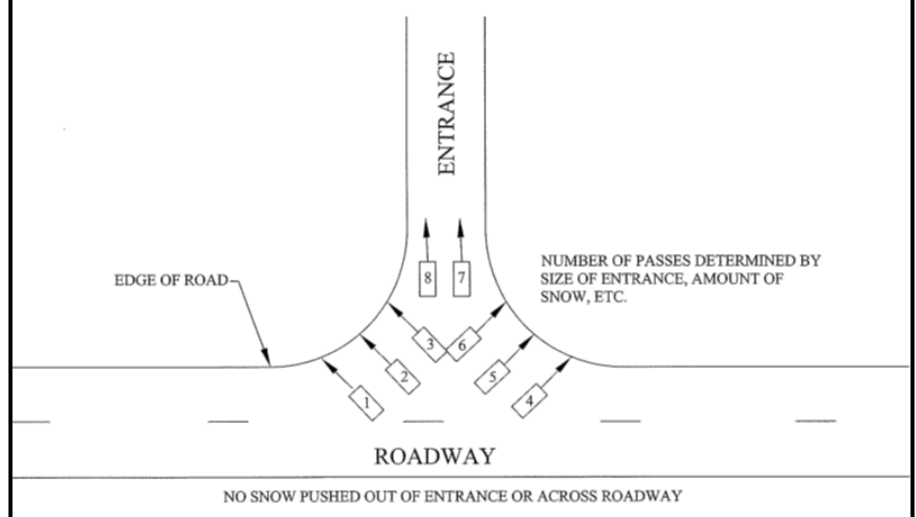
~Submitted by: Emergency Management Director/PIO, Christopher Muller



Driveway Snow Plowing Reminder

The Beltrami County Highway Department would like to remind county residents that it is unlawful under Minnesota Statutes 160.2715 to plow snow from driveways onto or across public roads. Piles of snow left on or near the road can freeze into a solid mass or cause drifting, creating hazardous situations for vehicles and snowplows. Accidents and damages caused by snow piles placed in the roadway may result in liability to the property owner. The diagram demonstrates the proper way to remove snow from driveways.

PROPER SNOW REMOVAL PROCEDURES FOR ENTRANCES OFF COUNTY ROADS



The Other Kind of Phishing

Phishing is a type of cyberattack in which attackers deceive users into providing sensitive information, such as login credentials, credit card numbers, or personal details. This type of attack has become more sophisticated, with criminals employing various tactics, such as fake emails, social media messages, or malicious websites that closely mimic legitimate ones. By pretending to be trusted sources—often banks, popular social media sites, or well-known businesses—phishers create a false sense of security, prompting users to share confidential information that can be used for identity theft, financial fraud, or system breaches.

The dangers of phishing extend beyond individual users to entire organizations. A single phishing email, if acted upon, can lead to severe consequences, including unauthorized access to sensitive company data, financial losses, and reputational damage. For example, in spear phishing—a targeted form of phishing—attackers focus on specific individuals, often within a business, using personalized information to make the attack more convincing. This approach can lead to severe breaches if high-level individuals or departments responsible for sensitive data are compromised. The financial impact of these attacks is significant, with companies often spending substantial resources on recovery and legal costs, in addition to the loss of customer trust.

Recognizing phishing emails is key to protecting yourself and your organization from cyber threats. Phishing emails are designed to look legitimate but often include subtle (and sometimes obvious) signs that can help you identify them before it's too late. Here are some common indicators of phishing emails:

- Suspicious Sender Address:** One of the easiest ways to spot a phishing email is to look at the sender's email address. Phishers often use addresses that are similar to legitimate ones but include slight changes, such as extra numbers, letters, or altered domains (e.g., **@microso0ft.com** instead of **@microsoft.com**).
- Generic Greetings:** Phishing emails frequently use generic greetings like "Dear Customer" or "Dear User" instead of your actual name. Most legitimate businesses address their customers by name in emails.
- Urgent or Threatening Language:** Phishers try to create a sense of urgency to make you act quickly. They may warn of account suspension, unauthorized activity, or missed payments, prompting you to respond without second-guessing.
- Poor Grammar and Spelling:** Legitimate companies usually proofread their emails carefully. Phishing emails often contain grammatical errors, awkward phrasing, or misspelled words. These errors can indicate that the email is from an untrustworthy source.
- Unexpected Attachments or Links:** Phishing emails may include attachments or links that lead to fake login pages or download malware. Hovering over links (without clicking) allows you to preview the actual URL. If the link looks suspicious or does not match the supposed sender's website, avoid clicking on it.
- Requests for Sensitive Information:** Legitimate organizations, especially financial institutions, typically won't ask for sensitive information—like passwords, Social Security numbers, or PINs—over email. If you receive a message asking for such details, it's likely a phishing attempt.
- Strange Logos or Visuals:** While phishing emails often mimic legitimate branding, some visual elements may seem slightly off. Look for low-quality logos, outdated designs, or colors that don't match the actual brand's usual look.
- Too-Good-to-Be-True Offers:** Some phishing emails entice users with offers that seem unrealistically generous, like winning a prize or receiving unexpected funds. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

By staying alert for these warning signs, you can more easily recognize and avoid phishing emails. Additionally, reporting any phishing attempts to your IT department helps protect others by increasing overall awareness of ongoing threats.

~Submitted by MIIS Director, Kevin Warne



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Real Estate & Tax Services	218-333-4138
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Social Services - Director Jeff Lind	218-333-4196

Economic Assistance Division

Director—Curt Anderson	218-333-4199
Public Health - Director Amy Bowles	218-333-8116

Veterans Services Shane Gustafson 218-333-4192

Law Enforcement Center

613 Minnesota Ave NW, Bemidji MN 56601

Sheriff Jason Riggs	218-333-9111
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Judicial Center

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Attorney—David Hanson	218-333-4219
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Main phone number

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