
Our Mission: Providing quality services through responsible leadership, innovation and the cooperation of dedicated people

Date: April 16, 2019
Contact: Yvonne Klinnert, Public Information Manager
Phone: 651-430-6026, after hours 952-807-3723
E-mail: yvonne.klinnert@co.washington.mn.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the April 16, 2019, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County will continue to use MPCA grant to enhance recycling

Washington County will continue to receive a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to pay for new or enhanced recycling after the County Board accepted the \$253,262 grant April 16.

The MPCA provides Local Recycling Development Grant (LRDG) funds annually to metropolitan counties. The money comes from a surcharge on metropolitan landfills. According to state law, the grants are provided to metropolitan counties for implementing new or enhanced recycling or to increase the effectiveness of existing activities in the county. Washington County uses its LRDG funds for recycling grants to cities and townships and other assistance. The additional funds will be used for the same purpose.

The grant period is through March 4, 2024.

The county uses money from the County Environmental Charge for the local match for the grant.

Contact: Nicole Stewart, Senior Environmental Resources Manager, 651-430-6713

County will continue to receive grant to provide support to families

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted a \$16,900 addition to a grant from the Minnesota Department of Health April 16 to provide funds for a program that supports pregnant and parenting families.

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Government Center • 14949 62nd Street North — P.O. Box 6, Stillwater, Minnesota 55082-0006

Phone: 651-430-6001 • Fax: 651-430-6017 • TTY: 651-430-6246

www.co.washington.mn.us

Equal Employment Opportunity / Affirmative Action

Washington County has been a recipient of the federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Grant since 2013. This is continued funding for home visiting that offers services to assist families facing significant stress. The program focuses on key protective factors, including parental resilience, social connections, concrete supports, knowledge of parenting and child development, nurturing, and attachment. The county serves approximately 90 to 100 families at a time. In 2018, 180 families received services.

The county received the additional funds for 2019 to support changes in staff. The grant now extends through Feb. 28, 2022.

Contact: Jill Timm, Public Health Senior Program Manager, 651-275-7286

County Board agrees to purchase right-of-way for Bailey Road project

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed April 16 to purchase right-of-way and associated easements for County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 18, or Bailey Road, improvements. The project is in Woodbury and Newport.

The project will improve the safety, capacity, and operations of CSAH 18 between CSAH 13 (Radio Drive) and Sterling Avenue. Construction is scheduled in 2020. The right-of-way estimate is approximately \$250,000 and is funded with state aid.

Contact: Mindy Leadholm, Right-of-Way Specialist-Property Manager, 651-430-4361

Sheriff's Office will work with BCA to investigate, prosecute crimes against children

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will work with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) in a multi-agency task force to investigate and prosecute crimes against children.

The County Board approved the agreement with the BCA April 16.

The intent of the task force is to investigate and prosecute crimes against children and the criminal exploitation of children that is committed with the use of computers, and disrupt organizations that commit the crimes. The BCA will receive a federal grant for the work, and then provide funding for equipment, training, and expenses, including travel and overtime, which are incurred by the Washington County Sheriff's Office during investigations.

The agreement goes from June 1 through May 31, 2024.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

County Board honors employees for exemplary service

The Washington County Board of Commissioners celebrated the county's fifth annual Employee Recognition Awards honors for exemplary performance April 16.

Employees were honored in the areas of customer service, employee engagement, innovation, teamwork, and excellence in county government. Throughout 2018, county employees were invited to nominate fellow employees for the service awards. The nominations were reviewed by a panel of employees.

The recipient of the Customer Service Award is Christine VonDeLinde. VonDeLinde, a resident of Oakdale, was nominated for her outstanding customer service work with victims of crimes and witnesses in Washington County. This year, there has been an uptick in identity theft cases and multi-victim identity theft cases, resulting in an increased need for customer response, and increased outreach to the community. At the beginning of the year, the high-volume identity theft case with hundreds of victims triggered a review of the process used for the victim-witness program.

VonDeLinde led the process to set up a separate email account, telephone messaging, and mailings to address victim needs. VonDeLinde could have relied on old processes to contact victims, but she went above and beyond and the county is better for it.

The recipients of the Employee Engagement Award are members of the Health, Safety, and Wellness event planning team, Kirsta Sanchez, Shannon Gamble, Jackie Law, Beth Brisky, Jamie Giesen, Julie Sorrem, Shannon Rudin, Lori Meyers, Sara Armstrong, Steven Hart, and Mark Prchal.

The team was nominated for its work in planning the fourth annual countywide Health, Safety, and Wellness event in 2018. One of the major initiatives for Washington County is improving the health of its employees. Healthy employees result in a more engaged workforce, and lower costs for health care, among other outcomes. The county has engaged in a number of shorter-term, less ambitious educational programs and events to promote the health of its workforce, but the Health, Safety, and Wellness event exceeds previous events by far in its ambition and reach. The event includes opportunities for employees to learn about healthy living, try new fitness activities, and attend

informational sessions on different wellness topics each year. The event encourages camaraderie, encompasses health, wellness, and safety education, and helps reinforce the county's vision, "A great place to live, work and play...today and tomorrow."

The recipients of the Innovation Award are members of the Public Defender Application form team, Cory Reedy, Jacqueline Dahms, Dennis Rondeau, Teresa Lee, Wade Luger, Kris Cunningham and Deb Lepper. The team was nominated for the Innovation Award for its work in updating a dated process. For years, the Public Defender Application form was presented to in-custody inmates in their holding cells just prior to their court appearance. The inmates would use clipboards and pencils to complete the application by hand, which took time. The handwritten responses were difficult to read, and the process delayed court proceedings. The team identified problems with the process and worked together to create a more efficient workflow.

The recipients of the Teamwork Award are members of the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) Project Team, Amanda Hollis, Dave Wilwert, Larry Phillips, Michele Abrahamsen, Tabatha Hansen, Sue Fennern, Teri Hatch, Katherine Berggren, Jan Webster, Sue Higgins, Terry Ditty, Waqar Ahmed, Patrick Gangl, Laurie Evans, Tom Norve, and Renee Heinbuch.

The team was nominated for its role in implementing the county's new Employee Self Service system. The members committed more than two years to work on a new human resources computer system, two years of working long hours, sacrificing holidays and vacation days, and staying the course when presented with challenge after challenge. The transition from a legacy system that was more than 30 years old was well managed by the project team through collaboration and cooperation with each county department. Key to the team's success was not only the collaboration and cooperation displayed with each other, but also efforts made to include representatives from each department to gather information for setting up the system and train employees.

The recipient of the Excellence in County Government Award is Rick Tungseth. For 23 years, Tungseth has delivered outstanding service to the people, agencies, and communities he interacts with every day in his role as a Sentence to Service (STS) crew leader. His unyielding traits of dedication, inclusiveness, positive energy, and service personify the best qualities of an ideal Washington County employee.

Despite the varied skill level and ability of program participants, Tungseth meets each individual where they are, drawing on individual strengths to guide his work crew through the course of a day. He models an excellent work ethic and commitment to service while instilling pride in giving back to the community. As the senior crew leader, Tungseth is the consummate mentor who offers guidance and assistance, and sets the professional standard for his peers.

Tungseth develops relationships with agencies and stakeholders countywide. His dedication and positive attitude have made him one of the more well-known and appreciated employees throughout the county. Over the years, Tungseth has interacted with many Washington County departments for both routine and unique projects. Tungseth demonstrates excellence in public service and his outstanding contributions to the STS program.

Contact: Kirsta Sanchez, Public Information Specialist, 651-430-6008



Rick Tungseth, center, Sentence to Service crew leader, receives the Washington County Excellence in County Government Award April 16. He is shown with Molly O'Rourke, county administrator, commissioners Stan Karwoski, District 2, Gary Kriesel, District 3, Fran Miron, District 1, and Wayne Johnson, District 4, along with Tom Adkins, Community Corrections director.

New county groundwater atlas presented to County Board

A representative from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reviewed a new groundwater atlas for Washington County April 16.

Information about the atlas was presented by Paul Putzier, a hydrogeologist supervisor from the DNR.

The DNR recently completed a Part B Geologic Atlas for Washington County, which focuses on groundwater. County atlases, which are developed by the DNR and the Minnesota Geological

Survey, in partnership with local entities, provide critical geologic information used by county staff, local governments, consultants, and state agencies, as well as people from business and industry and private citizens.

Specific to Washington County, the atlas has and will provide information on the White Bear Lake groundwater modeling, a septic system risk assessment, and information that addresses groundwater contamination from per and poly fluoro alkyl substances (PFAS). The part B atlas provides critical information on groundwater flow systems, aquifers, groundwater chemistry, and sensitivity to pollution.

Contact: Stephanie Souter, Public Health Program Supervisor, 651-430-6701

County Board proclaims April 26 as Arbor Day and May as Arbor Month

The Washington County Board of Commissioners proclaimed April 26 as Arbor Day and May as Arbor Month.

The county will celebrate Arbor Month at Lake Elmo Park Reserve with tree plantings on Saturday, May 11, and Saturday, May 18. The planting on May 11 will be from 10 a.m. to noon, and the planting May 18 will be from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Volunteers should meet at the Eagle Point Lake Trailhead.

National Arbor Day and Arbor Month help bring awareness to the value and benefits that trees provide to communities. This is especially important to Washington County as emerald ash borer becomes more established and eliminates ash trees. The resolution calls attention to the need for reforestation efforts to prepare for the impact of the emerald ash borer by planting many different species of native trees in yards, boulevards, city, and county land.

Contact: Dan MacSwain, Natural Resources Coordinator, 651-430-4323