News

County Offices Closed
The County Offices will be closed on Monday, January 20, 2020.

Why You Shouldn't Abbreviate the Year “2020.”
"The new year is giving scammers an easy way to forge documents, but you can protect yourself with an easy New Year's resolution: Stop abbreviating the year.” Page 3.

The History Behind Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
“On January 20th, the entire nation pauses in remembrance of a civil rights hero. At least, that’s the point of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, a federal holiday that takes place on the third Monday of each January. MLK day was designed to honor the activist and minister assassinated in 1968, whose accomplishments have continued to inspire generations of Americans.” Page 4.

Health Insurance Updates
Learn about new insurance updates. Page 5.

Online Suggestion Box
County staff are encouraged to anonymously submit their suggestions and comments to help improve the workplace. Visit the County Employees webpage for more information.

Events & Attractions

Family Snowshoe Hike
Saturday, January 18, 2020
Onamia, Minnesota

MN VEX Robotics Tournament
Thursday, January 30th—Saturday, February 1, 2020
St. Cloud, Minnesota

Employee Spotlight

Tommi Martinson
Administrative Financial Officer
Public Works Department

I have been working at Mille Lacs County for 3 months as the Administrative Financial Officer in Public Works. I really enjoy the different atmosphere that each day provides. I get to work with some very cool people and interact with the community. I enjoy being able to interconnect my past experiences with this position and I am eager to learn more.

I was born in St. Paul and moved to Big Lake in 1992. I stayed in Big Lake into my twenties and then moved around quite a bit after. I lived on the Big Island of Hawaii for 6 months and jumped out of a perfectly good airplane over Oahu, just because. I have two associates’ degrees (one as a Veterinary Technician) and graduated with my Bachelors in Business Management in December 2018. I am the Jack-Of-All-Trades just like my father, whom I am named after.

After reconnecting with my old crush from middle school, I moved back to Big Lake. We later married and are currently living in Zimmerman, with hopes to move to Milaca and purchase some land. We have 4 kids (my step boys Devin (11) and Danny (10), and my tornado toddlers Brady (5) and Charlee Ann (3). We currently do not have any pets, but I am hoping in the near future to get a couple of dogs, and a few cats, horses, llama, pigs, ducks, chickens, bunnies…maybe one day!

I spent 6 years in the Army National Guard as a Heavy Construction Equipment Repairer (Mechanic), and learned how to tear down an engine and
Employee Spotlight, Continued

put it back together to make it run again. I was at the top of my class and received a leadership award.

Before I had kids I was an avid bowler my highest score was a 289. I also spent 6 years preparing and rapidly destroying vehicles in the demolition derby. Currently my hobbies consist of running my kids around or them running all over me.

You may be surprised to find that I like trying things at least once, and most times am the first person to volunteer! In Hawaii, I not only walked 13 miles one way to work/school, I also learned dehorning, ear marking, tail docking, and castrating. I have also went hunting for wild boar and got lost in the middle of the woods I have worked with mountain lions, wolves, and handled eagles and owls. I am naturally mechanically inclined, and have repaired everything from my vehicle to my clothes dryer!

I like long socks and BIG cats… my two boys (cats) passed away within the last few years at 16 and 19 years old and one cat’s heaviest weight was 35 lbs.!

Employee Recognition Ceremony

The Mille Lacs County Employee Recognition Ceremony on Tuesday, December 17, 2019 was a success! The County Commissioners had the opportunity to acknowledge and thank staff for their (5-30) years of service. A delightful holiday lunch was available for all County staff following the event. Congratulations to all County staff recognized!

Right: Kyann Hamilton accepting her certificate from the County Commissioners.

Bottom right: Deanna Shaver enthused during the Employee Recognition Ceremony.

Employee Recognition Ceremony images courtesy of Diane Overby.
Why You Shouldn’t Abbreviate the Year “2020.”

“The new year is giving scammers an easy way to forge documents, but you can protect yourself with an easy New Year’s resolution: Stop abbreviating the year.

**Why?** This year's abbreviation is easily changeable and could be used against you. The concern is that scammers could easily manipulate a document dated ‘1/1/20’ into ‘1/1/2000’ or even ‘1/1/2021.’

Writing out the full date ‘could possibly protect you and prevent legal issues on paperwork,’ according to Hamilton County, Ohio, Auditor Dusty Rhodes.

While it’s early in the year for examples of this kind of fraud to emerge, the threat is real according to Ira Rheingold, the executive director of the National Association of Consumer Advocates.

In a message emailed to USA TODAY Thursday, Rheingold said scammers could use the method to establish an unpaid debt or to attempt to cash an old check.

‘Say you agreed to make payments beginning on 1/15/20. The bad guy could theoretically establish that you began owing your obligation on 1/15/2019, and try to collect additional $$$,’ Rheingold wrote.

In the future, post-dating could be a problem too. For example, a check dated ‘1/1/20’ could become ‘1/1/2021’ next year, possibly making the uncashed check active again, Rheingold wrote. A similar method could be used for debts that are past the statute of limits. The solution is easy: There's no harm in writing the full date. Writing the month out can also help. Write this: January 15, 2020. Not this: 1/15/20.”
“On January 20th, the entire nation pauses in remembrance of a civil rights hero. At least, that’s the point of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, a federal holiday that takes place on the third Monday of each January. MLK day was designed to honor the activist and minister assassinated in 1968, whose accomplishments have continued to inspire generations of Americans.

But though the holiday now graces the United States’ federal calendar and affects countless offices, schools, businesses, and other public and private spaces, it wasn’t always observed. The fight for a holiday in Martin Luther King, Jr.’s honor was an epic struggle in and of itself—and it continues to face resistance today in the form of competing holidays to leaders of the Confederacy.

King was the first modern private citizen to be honored with a federal holiday, and for many familiar with his non-violent leadership of the civil rights movement, it made sense to celebrate him. But for others, the suggestion that King—a black minister who was vilified during his life and gunned down when he was just 39 years old—deserved a holiday was nothing short of incendiary.

The first push for a holiday honoring King took place just four days after his assassination. John Conyers, then a Democratic Congressman from Michigan, took to the floor of Congress to insist on a federal holiday in King’s honor. However, the request fell on deaf ears.

One of the few black people in Congress, Conyers had been an active member of the Civil Rights Movement for years. He had visited Selma, Alabama, in support of King and the 1965 Freedom Day, one of several mass voter registration events in which large numbers of African-Americans attempted to register to vote despite local defiance and armed intimidation.

When his first bill failed, Conyers was undaunted. “Conyers would persist year after year, Congress after Congress, in introducing the same bill again and again, gathering co-sponsors along the way, until his persistence finally paid off,” writes historian Don Wolfensberger. He enlisted the help of the Congressional Black Caucus, of which he was a founding member. For 15 years, the CBC attempted to break the stalled legislation loose, advocating within their constituent communities and helping Conyers introduce his bill year after year. Every single attempt failed, even after the bill was brought to the floor for debate.

The tide finally turned in the early 1980s. By then, the CBC had collected six million signatures in support of a federal holiday in honor of King. Stevie Wonder had written a hit song, “Happy Birthday,” about King, which drove an upswell of public support for the holiday. And in 1983, as Civil Rights Movement veterans gathered in Washington to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the March on Washington, King’s seminal “I Have a Dream” speech, and the 15th anniversary of his murder, something shook loose.

When the legislation once again made it to the floor, it was filibustered by Jesse Helms, the Republican Senator from North Carolina. As Helms pressed to introduce FBI smear material on King—whom the agency had spent years trying to pinpoint as a Communist and threat to the United States during the height of his influence—into the Congressional record, tensions boiled over. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the Senator from New York, brought the materials onto the floor, then dropped them to the ground in disgust in a pivotal moment of the debate. The bill passed with ease the following day (78-22) and President Ronald Reagan immediately signed the legislation.

But though the first federal holiday was celebrated in 1986, it took years for observance to filter through to every state. Several Southern states promptly combined Martin Luther, King, Jr. Day with holidays that uplifted Confederate leader Robert E. Lee, who was born on January 19. Arizona initially observed the holiday, then rescinded it, leading to a years-long scuffle over whether to celebrate King that ended in multiple public referenda, major boycotts of the state, and a final voter registration push that helped propel a final referendum toward success in 1992.

It wasn’t until 2000 that every state in the Union finally observed Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Today, the holiday is still celebrated in conjunction with a celebration of Confederate slaveholders in some states—but after three decades of contention and controversy, at least it’s observed.


Health Insurance Updates

Now that open enrollment changes for 2020 have gone into effect, please review your pay advice slips (available through the payroll link) carefully to ensure that your elections are reflected accurately. This is the best way to ensure that the deductions from your paycheck are correct, and are only for benefits that you currently have in place. Please also double-check your hourly rate of pay beginning on the 1/16/19 payroll to make sure that you received the appropriate COLA increase, in accordance with your applicable union contract or uniform pay scale.

Following is a key to deciphering what the various deductions are for:

- Life Insurance Reimb = life insurance (2nd check of the month)
- Disability Ins = Long Term Disability (2nd check of the month)
- Short Term Disability (1st check of the month)
- Vision Insurance (1st check of the month)
- Flex Health Care (every check)
- Flex Day Care (every check)
- Med Ins (1st and 2nd checks of the month)
- Dental Ins (2nd check of the month)
- HSA employee contribution (every check)
- Cigna (1st and 2nd checks of the month)

If you encounter anything that looks incorrect, or have questions about, please contact Karly Fetters at extension 8456.
**Employees Moving**

- Andy Crego, promoted from Appraiser Trainee to Certified Appraiser.

**Employees Leaving**

- Carrie Butter, 911 Communications Specialist in the SO, leaving after less than a year of service.

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Greg Reid  
Sr. Highway Maintenance Worker  
**PW**

Jessie Dehn  
County Engineer  
**PW**

Joseph Vogl  
Deputy Sheriff  
**SO**

Jason Ross  
Correctional Officer  
**SO**

Tim Northway  
Sr. Highway Maintenance Worker  
**PW**

Sophia Meierding  
Social Worker  
**CVS**

Theodore Olson  
Deputy Sheriff  
**SO**
Excess levels of sodium/salt may cause:

**INCREASED WATER RETENTION,**
LEADING TO:

- Puffiness
- Bloating
- Weight gain

Your **HEALTH**

Excess levels of sodium/salt may put you at **RISK** for:

- STROKE
- HEART FAILURE
- OSTEOPOROSIS
- STOMACH CANCER
- KIDNEY DISEASE
- KIDNEY STONES
- ENLARGED HEART MUSCLE
- HEADACHES

Your **APPEARANCE**

Excess levels of sodium/salt may cause:

- INCREASED WATER RETENTION,
LEADING TO:

  - Puffiness
  - Bloating
  - Weight gain

9 out of 10 Americans consume too much sodium.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

- **65%**  
  supermarkets, convenience stores
- **25%**  
  restaurants
- **10%**  
  other sources

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

is a leading risk factor for death in **WOMEN** in the United States, contributing to nearly **200,000** female deaths each year.

That’s nearly five times the **42,000** annual deaths from breast cancer.

77.9 million American **ADULTS** have **high blood pressure**.

**KIDS** who have a high-sodium diet are **twice as likely to develop high blood pressure** as kids who have low-sodium diets

3,400 milligrams
the amount of sodium the average American consumes in a day

1,500 milligrams or less
recommended by the AHA for ideal heart health

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heart.org/sodium