

NEWS AND INFORMATION

McLeod County Newsletter



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ENGINEERED FOR SUCCESS

Andrew Engel's past experience led him to become the new County Engineer

After nearly 10 years of civil engineering experience, Andrew Engel is ready for his biggest job yet as he takes over as the new McLeod County Engineer and Public Works Director.

Following the departure of John Brunkhorst after 20 years at the helm of the McLeod County Public Works Department, Engel brings a breadth of experience that will serve residents and visitors of McLeod County well.

The Le Center native got his start in 2013 as the Assistant County Engineer in Rock County. In 2015, he was hired as Project Manager in Carver County, and then in 2019 he was promoted to Engineering



Andrew Engel is the new McLeod County Engineer and Public Works Director.

Supervisor. Finally, he landed in McLeod County as the Assistant County Engineer in April 2022, and less than one year later he has ascended to Public Works Director.

"I saw it as a great career opportunity, and a way for me to continue my

See ENGEL Page 5

Do you know about the Board of Appeal and Equalization?

Along with regular County Board meetings and workshops, the County also hosts its annual meeting of the Board of Appeal and Equalization. This Board is comprised of all five Commissioners, as well as County Auditor-Treasurer Connie M. Kurtzweg

This meeting is usually held in June. This year's McLeod County Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting is at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 20.

At this meeting, the Board examines and compares the

returns of the assessment of property of the towns or districts, and equalizes them so that each tract or lot of real property and each article or class of personal property is entered on the assessment list at its market value, subject to rules stated in Minnesota Statute 274.13.

Property owners may appeal to the County Board of Appeal and Equalization if they are not satisfied with the decision of their local Board of Appeal and Equalization, or if your city or town has transferred its powers to the County.

The Board is allowed reduce or raise the current year valuation of real or personal property and/or change the classification of any property. It may not alter taxes or assessments of prior years; reduce the aggregate market value of all property of the County; grant an exemption or order property removed from the tax rolls; or make an individual market value adjustment or classification change that would benefit property if the owner has refused the assessor access to inspect the property and the interior of any buildings or structures.

McLeod County News and Information

Issue 13

McLeod County News and Information is published quarterly. Visit www.tinyurl.com/3mruj54a to see past McLeod County newsletters or subscribe to have the newsletter delivered to your residence or business. The next issue of the newsletter is tentatively scheduled to be published June 29, 2023.

McLeod County was established in 1856.

Serving the cities of Biscay, Brownton, Glencoe, Hutchinson, Lester Prairie, Plato, Silver Lake, Stewart and Winsted; the townships of Acoma, Bergen, Collins, Glencoe, Hale, Hassan Valley, Helen, Hutchinson, Lynn, Penn, Rich Valley, Round Grove, Sumter and Winsted; and independent school districts #423 (Hutchinson), #424 (Lester Prairie), #465 (Litchfield), #2159 (Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart), #2365 (Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop), #2687 (Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted) and #2859 (Glencoe-Silver Lake).



Contact Information

Government Center

520 Chandler Ave. N. | Glencoe, MN 55336
p. 320-864-1328 | f. 320-864-1809
mcleod.administration@co.mcleod.mn.us

Fairgrounds/Parks and Recreation

840 Century Ave. S.W. | Hutchinson, MN 55350
p. 320-484-4334 | f. 320-864-1811
mcleod.parksandrecreation@co.mcleod.mn.us

Court Administration

830 11th St. E. | Glencoe, MN 55336
p. 320-864-1281 | f. 320-864-5905

Environmental Services

1065 Fifth Ave. S.E. | Hutchinson, MN 55350
p. 320-484-4300 | f. 320-484-4315
mcleod.solidwaste@co.mcleod.mn.us

Law Enforcement Center

801 10th St. E. | Glencoe, MN 55336
p. 320-864-3134 | f. 320-864-5920

Public Works/Highway

1400 Adams St. | Hutchinson, MN 55350
p. 320-484-4321 | f. 320-234-6971

Save time scheduling appointments with QLess

Planning a visit to the McLeod County Government Center? Save time with QLess, the County's virtual waiting line and appointment scheduler. Simply visit <https://tinyurl.com/b5yey8ds> to schedule your appointment in advance or check for same-day availability. Call 320-864-1426 for assistance.

Use QLess for your License Center, Assessor, Auditor-Treasurer, Recorder and Veterans Services needs.

Once you've scheduled an appointment, QLess will send you live updates on your place in line. Appointments scheduled with QLess are prioritized over walk-in appointments.

Administrator's Message

What's happening with County ARPA dollars?

ADMINISTRATOR

Sheila Murphy



In 2021, McLeod County met with local governments to navigate the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding allocated to our municipalities. We worked through an Interim Final Ruling for nearly a year until the U.S. Department of Treasury issued the Final Rule effective April 1, 2022.

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) are typically referred to as "ARPA dollars." Payments to local governments were issued in two distributions on May 2021 and May 2022. McLeod County uses its Coronavirus Relief Fund Committee to oversee fund distribution recommendations to the Budget Committee and the County Board. Funds are required to be allocated for distribution by December 31, 2024, and expended on those identified allocations by December 31, 2026. Funds expended must meet the requirements issued by the Department of Treasury's Final Rule.

By now, the majority of townships and cities in McLeod County have allocated and/or expended their received funds. McLeod County was allocated approximately \$6.9 million dollars from the SLFRF Program. In late 2022, the County was also allocated approximately \$50,000 in Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Funds (LATCF) specified to be used on governmental purpose. Including interest earned in 2021 and 2022, McLeod County's total revenue collected is approximately \$7 million dollars as of March 8, 2023.

During the first course of Coronavirus Relief funding in 2020 from the CARES Act, McLeod County received around \$4.6 million dollars. That funding was dedicated to community resilience, business and non-profit assistance, education support, county emergency response and expenses. An additional allocation of \$700,000 came in 2021; these dollars were issued to eligible businesses with needs that hadn't been met through other Coronavirus Relief funding sources.

Significant projects that McLeod County has designated ARPA funds for include:

ARMER Radios - Over \$1.8 million dollars for upgraded emergency radios for local public safety agencies.

McLeod County Fairgrounds and Parks - \$2.65 million for the improvement of County parks and fairgrounds. Over \$17,000 was identified for the McLeod County Parks Plan.

Glencoe Area Transportation Services (GATS) - \$1 million toward the costs of constructing a public works/highway facility in Glencoe, adjacent to the Minnesota Department of Transportation and City of Glencoe highway facilities.

McLeod County Agricultural Association - \$500,000 to the Agricultural Association; \$100,000 of this was used to offset admission costs for the 150th McLeod County Fair in 2022.

McLeod County Housing and Redevelopment (HRA) - \$500,000 toward existing housing updates

Other impacts include water improvement projects (Buffalo Creek Watershed District, Lake Marion Improvement Project, County Ditch 11), Adult Training and Habilitation Center facility improvements, an air unit replacement at the Courthouse, and signage for vaccination clinics. Watch the County Board agendas for any upcoming news on unallocated funds.



McLeod County's COVID Response

Staff COVID hours: 27,387.5



Total of internal & external meetings held: 107



Total COVID vaccines administered: 11,027



COVID vaccine clinics: 150



Contact Tracings: 768



Essential Services requests completed: 97



COVID tests kits distributed: 2,205



N95 mask fit tests completed: 102



KN95 masks distributed: 6,000



Testing event: 791 people tested



No stranger to big projects

ENGEL from Page 1

experience in the McLeod County area,” Engel said about his interest in the Director position. “Working with the staff we have is amazing.”

While Engel has only been working at McLeod County for a year, he and his wife have lived in Hutchinson since 2016, where their young family has grown to now include a 2-year-old son and another baby on the way.

Engel hasn’t completed many projects in McLeod County yet, but people may be familiar with his work elsewhere. In Norwood Young America, he was instrumental in the roundabout project on State Highway 5 and Carver County Road 33, near the Kwik Trip off U.S. Highway 212.

“I was the project manager through the design process of that project,” he said. “That was a pretty fun project. Pretty tight time frame, but we got it done.”

His experience isn't only with roads and highways. When the Carver County Parks Department ran into permitting issues with a trail along State Highway 5, near the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, they called Engel in to fix the problem.

“I helped the parks department work through those issues and get that project out for bids,” he said.

That diverse experience will be needed as the McLeod

2023 McLeod County Highway Projects

Here's a look at the larger construction projects planned for 2023.

- Roundabout construction at Trunk Highway 7 and County Road 1. This is a joint project between the County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. It will not begin until after Winstock. A detour will use County Roads 9, 23, 22 and 15. A truck detour will also use County Roads 9, 3 and 15.
- Roundabout construction at County Roads 115 and 25 (Airport Road and Jefferson Road near Hutchinson). This project will be done in conjunction with a 3.3-mile concrete overlay of County Road 115, between County Road 7 and Trunk Highway 22. A right turn lane will be added at the Fairgrounds entrance along with other modifications at Montreal Street.
- Concrete pavement repair on County Road 115 between County Road 7 and Trunk Highway 7. This project involves fixing some of the distresses in concrete that's about 20 years old.
- Bridge deck repairs on the County Road 71 bridge over the South Fork Crow River, near Biscay.
- County Road 5 extension project between County Roads 1 and 9, in Winsted.
- Installation of ground-in, high-durability pavement markings on recent concrete projects for safety.

County Public Works Department not only oversees highway, but also the County's parks and fairgrounds, which are important amenities to residents.

“That’s a big part of the job, especially with the parks plan that’s in progress and upcoming improvements at all the county parks, as well as the Fairgrounds,” Engel said.

After being officially appointed County Engineer on March 21, Engel knows he has a lot of work ahead of him. Not only is he preparing for multiple highway projects in 2023 and 2024, he’s doing so without a full workforce. Finding people to fill those positions will be a top priority.

“Immediately, the big goal for me is to backfill the Assistant

County Engineer position and other staffing,” he said. “We’ve got an open Highway Accountant position, and then we’ve also got the open Parks and Fairgrounds Manager position. Getting those people in place is going to be critical to help everyone succeed.”

Beyond that, Engel is looking forward to digging into the County's roads and highways system, identifying needs, and constructing a comprehensive plan to manage it all. He doesn't expect any major changes at the Public Works Department as he takes over, and he's grateful for his predecessor's help in preparing him for this new challenge.

“John (Brunkhorst) laid a great foundation to work off of,” Engel said.

What to expect for 2023 property valuations



Assessor

Sue Schulz

Property owners may see increases in tillable acreage and pocketed residential areas around the County

Minnesota Statute requires the Minnesota Department of Revenue to perform an annual sales ratio study. According to the Minnesota Department of Revenue, "The study measures the relationship between appraised values and actual sale prices, indicating both the level of assessment (how close appraisals are to market value on an overall basis) and the uniformity of assessment (how close individual ratios are to the median ratio and each other). As a mathematical expression, a sales ratio is the assessor's estimated market value (EMV) of a property divided by its sales price" (September 2021).

In 2022 we saw record increases in values in all areas of the County. In 2023 we will see some pocketed areas that are still showing significant growth despite the higher interest rate. The residential properties in the cities of Plato, Brownton, Lester Prairie, and Glencoe, along with the townships of Helen and Hutchinson, are still seeing significant increases.

The State Department of Revenue shares, "generally, a median ratio between 90% and 105% is considered in compliance," in reference to EMV on all properties. The pocketed areas have seen sale prices of homes that have come in below the 90% minimum.

Further, "sales information is the basis of the Sales Ratio Study. In Minnesota, all real estate transactions over \$3,000 must be reported on an electronic Certificate of Real Estate Value (eCRV)," according to Minnesota Statute 272.115.

The increases are also affecting agricultural land, with a roughly 20% increase on tillable acreage value shown in the State's study.

When sales are reported, the role of the County Assessor's staff is to compare the sale price to the current estimated market value. This provides data to calculate the ratio (required to be at a minimum of 90%). The annual sales study data gathering period for 2023 values uses sales data from October 2021 through September 2022. The ratios are set in an array, and the medium number is the ratio that determines changes to be made. Each taxing district has its own ratio study, and each classification has its own sale study.

At the end of the sales study, the Minnesota Department of Revenue applies a market condition trend to the sales data. This is commonly called a time adjustment. The McLeod County annual assessment date is January 2. The time adjustment is performed by adjusting all sales to a specific date in time.

To learn more about the property assessment process, McLeod County property valuation, or for specific contact information, please visit the McLeod County website Assessor's page at www.co.mcleod.mn.us. The general phone number for the County Assessor's office is 320-864-1254.

Property valuations will be sent to property owners once finalized. Property owners who wish to contact us to discuss their specific valuation should do so after their valuation notice has been received.



McLeod County Announcements

Upcoming office closures

McLeod County offices will be closed on:

- Monday, May 29, 2023, for Memorial Day.

Normal office hours will resume the following business day.

County recognized with Special Project Award

In January, McLeod County was presented the Minnesota County Engineers Association Special Project of the Year award for 2022.

The award was in recognition of completing the County State-Aid Highway 15/Morningside Avenue Project in Glencoe. This project, which has been included in comprehensive planning documents and transportation studies back to the 1960s, established a local and regional connection in the city.

The project included multiple partnerships and several obstacles, such as construction of a highway where there was no existing road through well over half of the total 1.1-mile corridor length, removing homes, a new bridge crossing, constructing a realigned intersection with U.S. Highway 212, a new railroad crossing and more.

This is a special award that is not given every year. In the past six years, it has only been given one time.

community spotlight

Raising awareness for mental health

In the U.S. today, about 130 people die by suicide every day, and 40% of adults struggle with mental health. Those are alarming numbers, but as Tammy Diehn of rural Arlington will tell you, it's not the statistics that make suicide real, it's when you love one of the numbers.

Diehn is Executive Director of 2B Continued, an organization dedicated to increasing awareness of suicide prevention, mental health and wellness through advocacy, education and outreach. She founded the group in 2019 in memory of her sister, Shelly "Teuby" Teubert, a Hutchinson nurse who sadly was one of those suicide numbers in 2017.

"What I've realized in my journey is that people are struggling, and people can be vulnerable," Diehn said.

Since its founding, 2B Continued has doubled its service area from four to eight counties, including McLeod, Meeker, Sibley, Carver, Wright, Renville, Nicollet and Brown.

Community outreach is an important part of the work 2B Continued does. You may have seen them at schools, county fairs and parades, or you may have seen the yard signs distributed as part of Mental Health Awareness Month in May. But that's not all the group does. It offers

bereavement support and educational training to give people tools for recognizing and addressing mental health issues.

Perhaps the group is best known for raising funds through several events, most notably its annual "Dancing Like the Stars" competition that pits local "celebrities" in a dancing competition similar to the hit ABC television show of similar name.

"My baby sister and I, a connection that we had was that we loved music and we loved to dance," Diehn said. "So the idea to have a 'Dancing Like the Stars' show morphed out of thinking that I wanted to find a way how I could celebrate who she was while raising awareness."

Funds raised by these events help 2B Continued carry out its mission, which in 2022 impacted more than 14,040 people.

You can visit www.2bcontinued.org to learn more.

Lastly, if you or someone you know needs help, visit www.988lifeline.org or call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988.

"Please know that you are not alone, and help is available," Diehn said.



McLEOD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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UPCOMING MEETING DATES

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. APRIL 4, 2023
McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. APRIL 18, 2023
McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. MAY 2, 2023
McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. MAY 16, 2023
McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. JUNE 6, 2023
McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 4:30 P.M. JUNE 20, 2023
McLeod County Government Center

BOARD OF APPEAL AND EQUALIZATION | 6:00 P.M. JUNE 20, 2023
McLeod County Government Center



MCLEOD COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

520 CHANDLER AVENUE NORTH
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