From 123 S. Minnesota Avenue to 1301 Marshall Street in St. Peter, the Power Up Clubhouse found a new home this Spring. Purchased by Nicollet County in December of 2021, the new space offers increased accessibility and safety, a larger gathering space for a variety of monthly activities, natural light, and a large outdoor space for yard games, garden beds, and socialization. The larger space also includes several offices for Nicollet County’s Adult Mental Health team to offer increased support to members of the Clubhouse.

Never heard of the Clubhouse? The Power Up Clubhouse is a safe, stigma-free place for persons experiencing mental illness to feel welcome and supported, socialize with friends, and receive increased access to resources in the community. The Clubhouse creates an atmosphere of acceptance and a sense of belonging. There are currently 68 active members that attend weekly educational, recreational, and social activities. There are a variety of activities to help members overcome loneliness and isolation.
The Power Up Clubhouse, cont.

Some of the activities the Clubhouse offers include:

- mental health recovery groups
- medication education
- budgeting assistance
- exercise groups
- men’s and women’s groups
- cooking classes
- employability groups

The Power Up Clubhouse first opened with a space on the St. Peter Regional Treatment Center campus, in connection with the Adult Therapeutic Community Program. It then moved to the Central Community Center prior to its destruction by the tornado in 1998. The Clubhouse then leased space at 212 S. Minnesota Avenue before finding a new location at 123 S. Minnesota Ave. in 2003, where it has served members and staff well for the past 20 years.

The Power Up Clubhouse is staffed by Nicollet County employees, as well as a peer support specialist who is contracted through Horizon Homes. Clubhouse members are referred by County case managers, treating physicians, therapists, and other mental health professionals. There is no cost to members for most activities, and transportation can be coordinated or provided.

The Clubhouse is largely funded by mental health and community support grants. These grants were developed to meet goals related to deinstitutionalization and reducing admissions to emergency rooms and psychiatric facilities.

Staff and members are excited about the new program space and the opportunities it will bring. As the Clubhouse undergoes physical changes, watch for a new name to be shared as well!

If you would like more information regarding the Power Up Clubhouse, please reach out to Melissa Plath, the Clubhouse coordinator, at (507) 934-4444, or Melissa.Plath@co.nicollet.mn.us.

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Foster Care and Respite Providers Needed!

Do you enjoy helping children and making a difference? If so, please consider becoming a foster parent or a respite care provider. Foster parents provide temporary care for children until they can be reunited with their parents. Respite care providers care for children in need on a more temporary basis, such as fostering children for a weekend when a family is struggling and in need of extra support.

Both foster care and child respite care have been shown to decrease instances of maltreatment and abuse, as well as out-of-home placements. The process for becoming a respite care provider is the same as becoming a foster care provider. You would also have the flexibility to help other families in need when it works for you.

Foster parents and Respite providers must:

- Be at least 21 years of age
- Pass a background study
- Own or rent their home, and pass a home safety inspection
- Be free from chemical abuse problems for at least two years

Becoming a respite or foster care provider is a great opportunity to make a positive difference for individual families. Strong support systems help our communities grow and thrive!

If you are interested in becoming licensed for foster care or respite care, please contact the licensor, Melissa Schallock, at (507) 934-8579 or Melissa.Schallock@co.nicollet.mn.us.
President Ronald Reagan recognized that crime victims were underserved within the criminal justice system. In April 1981, he proclaimed the first Crime Victims’ Week. Since then, National Crime Victims’ Rights Week has been recognized annually to honor victim survivors and promote crime victims’ rights and services. This year, National Crime Victims’ Rights Week is April 24 to 30, 2022.

The County Attorney’s Office cannot represent crime victims, but we do have responsibilities to them. The role of the Nicollet County Victim/Witness Coordinator is to work with crime victims to make sure their rights are recognized and upheld throughout the court case. Some of those rights include the ability to:

- Receive notification of criminal charges filed (or the decision to decline/dismiss criminal charges).
- Receive notification of an offender being released from custody.
- Attend court hearings, including plea and sentencing hearings.
- Apply for reparations, if appropriate.
- Request restitution for any out-of-pocket expenses incurred if an offender is convicted.
- Object to a proposed plea agreement at the plea hearing, either verbally or in writing.
- Give a victim impact statement at the sentencing hearing.
- Receive notification of the outcome of a case.
- Receive notification of post-conviction rights.

Crime victims do not ask to become a part of the criminal justice system. For many, it is their first contact with the criminal justice system. It is the goal of the Victim/Witness Coordinator to take the confusion out of the criminal justice system for victims, to ensure their voices are heard and their rights are upheld, and to direct them to any other agencies for services they may need. For more information, please contact (507) 934-7890.

The Nicollet County Sheriff’s Office would like to remind citizens that we are a Project Lifesaver member. This program provides assistance to those that have the tendency to wander. We use technology to assist those who care for victims of Alzheimer’s, Dementia, Autism, Down Syndrome and any other cognitive condition that may cause wandering. The program was created with two goals in mind: to streamline search and rescue procedures, and to help save lives.

Citizens enrolled in the program wear a small transmitter on the wrist or ankle that emits a unique radio frequency signal. These signals assist caregivers and local emergency agencies in locating the citizen if they wander away. The average rescue time is often within 30 minutes.

For more information on this program, please contact Sheriff Dave Lange at (507) 931-1570.
In early 2019, a small group of concerned parents, law enforcement officers, faith leaders, mental health professionals, educators, and community leaders came together to address the issue of increased use of substances in Nicollet County schools. These conversations led to the creation of a grass-roots coalition, the Adolescent Chemical Wellness Advocates (ACWA). ACWA was created to understand the reasons behind underage substance use and to develop more effective intervention strategies. Nicollet County was recently awarded a Drug-Free Communities grant from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. The grant has allowed Nicollet County Health and Human Services to hire Derrek Harju as the new Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Program Coordinator. His main role will be to promote and sustain the coalition’s mission of preventing and reducing substance use among youth in our communities. Derrek Harju moved to St. Peter in 2014. He joins ACWA with an extensive background in criminal justice. He has spent the last nine years working at the Nicollet County Sheriff’s Office as a 911 Emergency Dispatcher and part-time Deputy Sheriff. He was previously a Deputy Sheriff in North Dakota. Derrek is excited to develop tools for our community that will help combat youth substance use.

I'm excited to get involved in the community I live in and make a difference. Coming from the Sheriff’s Office, I have seen firsthand how youth substance use is a concern in the community. I have children myself who are growing up in this community, and I want to make Nicollet County a healthier place for all of our youth.

To learn more about ACWA, visit https://www.facebook.com/NCACWA. Derek can also be reached by email at Derrek.Harju@co.nicollet.mn.us.
Temporary embankment stabilization work was completed in the fall of 2020 due to the damage caused by the Minnesota River flooding in 2019 and 2020. The project area is from the County Road (CR) 14 and County Road (CR) 21 intersection, and proceeding east for approximately 1,500 ft.

Nicollet County, along with the consulting firms SRF and Gale Tech Engineering, continue to investigate permanent repair and stabilization options. Once an acceptable repair option is identified, staff will present to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). FHWA will be providing funding for the project from their FHWA Emergency Relief program. It is anticipated that work will begin in 2023. The temporary work is performing well and will continue to hold until the permanent work begins.

**COUNTY ROAD 15**

This project involves reconstruction and concrete surfacing from Trunk Highway (TH) 111 to County Road (CR) 51. Plans and specifications have been completed. There have been delays in acquiring the additional road right-of-ways. Due to these delays, the bidding process will not occur until late summer of 2022. Tree clearing, tile exploration, and utility relocation efforts could occur with CR 15 remaining open to traffic, as long as a contractor can be awarded the project early this fall. Full reconstruction work would begin in the spring of 2023, with a detour going into effect. The project should be completed, and the road reopened to traffic, in fall of 2024.

**COUNTY ROAD 23**

Due to flooding rains over the past several years, a 60” metal culvert crossing approximately 1.7 miles north of the Minnesota River has developed significant erosion issues on the outlet. There are also erosion issues on the downstream ravine and road ditches that feed into the culvert crossing. Plans are being developed to repair the area damaged by erosion. Construction is anticipated to begin in late summer or fall of 2022. A detour will likely not be needed, but expect single lane road closures during the project.

**BELGRADE TOWNSHIP - KERNS DRIVE**

A failing culvert crossing on Kerns Drive will soon need to be replaced with a new box culvert. MnDOT State Aid Township Bridge funds and local township funds will be used for this project. Initial design work has begun, including environmental permitting through the DNR. Plans should be completed in the summer of 2022. Depending on funding, construction is anticipated to begin this year. If funds are not available, then the project will begin in 2023.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The Nicollet County Public Works Department received a 2021 MnDOT/Concrete Paving Association of MN award for the Best County Concrete Overlay project on CSAH 13 from 506th St. to Trunk Highway 99.

Thank you Public Works for all you do!
On July 1, 2021, probation services in Nicollet County switched from a “County Probation Office (CPO)” to “Nicollet County Community Corrections (NCCC).” Under the previous CPO model, probation services provided supervision for all juvenile cases and adult supervision for all pre-trial, misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor cases. As a Community Corrections agency, staff has now taken on supervision for nearly all adult felony cases, in addition to their original caseloads. The Department of Corrections (DOC) continues to provide supervision for Intensive Supervised Release and Level 3 sex offenders.

Probation is used as an alternative to incarceration. If an individual violates their probation conditions, the case is referred back to the sentencing judge for review, and in some cases prison time may be imposed.

Offenders released from prison are on supervised release and follow conditions set forth by the DOC. If an individual violates the conditions of their supervised release, a warrant may be issued and they may be taken into custody. Next, the case is reviewed to determine the severity of the violation and what action should be taken as a result. For some technical, or less severe, violations, offenders may have their release conditions structured before being released back into the community to continue on supervision. More severe violations may require the offender to be brought back to prison. The Hearings and Release unit of the DOC has the legal authority to bring individuals under supervision back to prison, as long as the court-imposed sentence is still in effect.

With the switch to NCCC, staff took over supervision of offenders who have committed sexual offenses. Supervision of these offenders was previously done by the DOC. This is considered an enhanced sex offender (ESO) caseload, which looks much different than a traditional felony caseload. Where traditional offenders may struggle, ESO clients generally have more success. This may include sobriety, gainful employment and stable housing. Instead of administering drug tests to check for compliance, sexual offenders are often required to complete some kind of therapy or treatment program. The ESO Agent works closely with treatment therapists to ensure compliance and adequate progress while completing the program. The ESO Agent also continues to work with outside agencies to provide the most effective supervision to promote positive change amongst the individuals we work with.
Nicollet County continues to operate seven rural recycling locations that operate 24/7, year-round. Nicollet County residents are reminded not to dump illegal materials that do not belong in these containers. The rural recycling locations are funded by solid waste special assessment fees. Please be a good neighbor as you use these facilities and dispose of your items properly. As a reminder, cameras have been installed at selected locations. If illegal dumping becomes an issue, these cases will be investigated further.

For more information on our upcoming recycling events, visit our Tri-County & Nicollet County websites. For information on what can be recycled, visit the Nicollet County Waste Wizard or call us at (507) 381-9196. Make every day Earth Day by keeping Nicollet County clean!

The Blue Earth County Household Hazardous Waste Facility (HHW) will be open with regular hours beginning on Tuesday, April 5, 2022. Residents should call (507) 304-4251 for disposal needs.
Marie Dranttel  Chair  
District One Commissioner  
(507) 327-4706  
marie.dranttel@co.nicollet.mn.us

Terry Morrow  
District Two Commissioner  
(507) 327-8226  
terry.morrow@co.nicollet.mn.us

District Three- Vacant

Jack Kolars  Vice-Chair  
District Four Commissioner  
(507) 327-9987  
jack.kolars@co.nicollet.mn.us

John Luepke  
District Five Commissioner  
(507) 359-2705  
john.luepke@co.nicollet.mn.us

Nicollet County Courthouse and Government Center  
501 S. Minnesota Ave.  
St. Peter, MN 56082  
Hours of Operation:  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Law Enforcement Center  
501 S. Minnesota Ave.  
St. Peter, MN 56082  
Hours of Operation:  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Jail & Dispatch 24/7

Nicollet County Health and Human Services (HHS)  
622 S. Front Street  
St. Peter, MN 56082  
Hours of Operation:  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Public Works  
1700 Sunrise Drive  
St. Peter, MN 56082  
Hours of Operation:  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

For more information on the County Board, visit our website or scan the QR Code:

Connect With Us!  
Nicollet County  
Government Center  
501 S. Minnesota Ave  
St. Peter, MN 56082  
Phone: (507) 934-6800  
www.co.nicollet.mn.us

OUR MISSION:  
Providing efficient services with innovation and accountability.

OUR VALUES:  
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