



News and Highlights

Destructive Derecho: One Year Later

June 21, 2025 Derecho

As the calendar has advanced another year, Beltrami County takes a look back at the destructive derecho that changed the landscape across the region for a generation in the early morning hours of June 21, 2025. This topic will take several articles from multiple departments to illustrate the magnitude and remaining impacts for the County.

Health and Human Services Director Anne Lindseth will share the efforts, successes and challenges related to long-term recovery efforts through partnerships with community organizations. Beltrami County’s managed forests were significantly impacted and Natural Resource Management Director Shane Foley shares the plan for stabilization of the timber inventory.

Disasters of this magnitude undoubtedly introduce challenges in recovery, especially through multi-jurisdictional coordination and planning. A significant nuance unique in this disaster was the overlapping of political jurisdictions in shared geography that had varying relationships with FEMA. Emergency Management Director Christopher Muller will explain how some residents were eligible for assistance while others were not.

Prepared communities are resilient communities. This storm tested the preparedness and stressed the resiliency of the region. Beltrami County continues to bounce back from this storm that has been described as the most significant straight-line wind event in a century. Public Information Officer Christopher Muller will share how working with the National Weather Service and other responders are implementing lessons learned and best practices from the storm response. Turn to pages 2 and 3 for more articles and information related to the storm.

Chris Muller

Emergency Management Director

The Tale of Two Disasters

Physical and Financial

The June 21, 2025 storm that impacted Beltrami County left a wide path of destruction 10 miles wide across the entire southern edge of the county and local responders immediately began emergency response efforts to protect lives and clear debris. Staff worked extended hours for weeks as recovery costs quickly escalated. A State of Emergency was declared to access additional resources and to ensure eligibility for potential disaster reimbursement.

Damage assessments revealed nearly \$9.7 million in cost for Beltrami County alone—just below Minnesota’s \$10.7 million threshold to request federal assistance. With additional damages reported by other jurisdictions, reaching the threshold initially seemed likely. However, the process required strict scrutiny, as falling short could delay recovery and jeopardize eligibility for federal assistance.

Beltrami County shares geography with the Leech Lake and Red Lake tribal nations, having overlapped political jurisdictions. The tribes have the option to work directly with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

through nation-to-nation relationships which can create unique challenges for the County.

While appropriate and consistent with federal policy, the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe opted to exercise their rights and work directly with FEMA. Leech Lake cannot be faulted for doing what is in the best interest of their community, but this process had unintended consequences of reducing the counties and state’s damages to below the federal indicator as the tribal nation’s damages do not count towards Minnesota’s indicator. This resulted in the State being short of the threshold to request FEMA assistance. This was despite Beltrami County exceeding the indicator forty-four times.

Leech Lake successfully received FEMA assistance for both public infrastructure damage and individual assistance, creating disparities where some county residents qualified for aid while others did not. Based on tribal affiliation, this benefit was also extended outside of the contiguous tribal nation. Disaster assistance through the Small Business Administration was also hindered by this situation as any property that was



previously used for Leech Lake’s declaration could not be “double dipped” and was not reportable for the County.

Bills were introduced in the House of Representatives and Senate citing the unique situation and efforts were made to fill the funding gap for Beltrami County, which likely exceeded \$3M. This action was unprecedented, but so was the impedance in receiving federal assistance. The bills were unsuccessful, leaving reimbursements to the limitation of Minnesota’s Disaster Assistance Contingency Account. Beltrami County continues to address the issue to mitigate future adverse impacts of this unique relationship and work closely with our tribal partners to achieve as efficient process as possible.



Shane Foley

Natural Resource Management Director

Storm Damage to Public Lands

One year after the June windstorm, its impacts are still being felt across the Natural Resources Management Department. Over the past year, more than twenty tracts of storm-damaged timber have been sold, ranging from small 10-acre parcels to areas exceeding 250 acres. Red pine and aspen were the hardest hit, with timber values in some cases reduced by more than 50 percent compared to pre-storm pricing. We are especially appreciative of the loggers who worked through difficult conditions to clean up debris and quickly restore public access.

Recovery efforts will continue over the next two spring planting seasons. Reestablishing red pine requires an investment of up to \$800 per acre for site preparation and planting, and many affected areas will need reforestation. Thanks to the County Board’s leadership, a portion of timber revenue is set aside annually for planting, along with a dedicated disaster recovery fund to address events like windstorms and disease out-

breaks. This planning will help return these lands to active timber production more quickly.

County parks have largely returned to normal operations, thanks to volunteers and grant-in-aid clubs who contributed hundreds of hours clearing and reopening trails. The only remaining closure is the Mississippi High Banks campsite, which sustained some of the most severe damage but is nearing reopening.

We remain committed to restoring public lands so they can continue generating revenue for the county and providing opportunities for outdoor recreation. Hope to see you in the woods sometime.

Kevin Trappe

GIS Director

Plant a Tree

Put it on the Map



Add your planting location to the community map and help track restoration efforts across Beltrami County. Every tree added to the map tells the story of families, friends, and neighbors coming together to renew the forests we all love.

1. Plant a tree (or a hundred)
2. Put it on the map
3. Take pride in renewing the Northwoods



Fill out the survey at www.beltramicountymn.gov/treeplanting OR use the QR Code

ATTENTION HOMEOWNERS

Homestead Classification Information

For a parcel to receive the homestead classification, the State of Minnesota requires a property to have an application on file with the county. As the Assessor’s Office is reviewing parcels classified as homestead, property owners may receive a letter requesting an updated application.

Please reach out to the Assessor’s Office for assistance in obtaining application information or with questions.

218-333-4113 or 218-333-4110

Tony Hansen

University of MN Extension Regional Director

Tree Planting Project at the Fairgrounds

After the June 21, 2025 storm, many trees at the Beltrami County Fairgrounds were lost or damaged. In response, Extension Master Gardener Dan Sherman proposed a replanting project in partnership with the Master Gardener group and the Beltrami County Agriculture Association (BCAA). The goal is to introduce a variety of lesser-known, hardy tree species—primarily those suited for USDA Zone 4—despite the fairgrounds being located in Zone 3b.

Why plant Zone 4 trees? As climate patterns shift, hardiness zones are gradually moving north, making it important to diversify species now. This approach also helps prepare for the spread of emerald ash borer, already detected as far north as Hackensack and Remer, by establishing alternative trees that will provide future shade and habitat.

The project is off to a strong start, with seven trees recently planted: two coffee trees, three Autumn Blaze maples, one buckeye, and one fast-growing oak. Ongoing work includes staking, mulching, watering, and protecting the trees from wildlife.

Future plans include installing signage for each species, complete with QR codes for additional information, creating an educational experience for visitors. The project will continue as funding allows, with a crowdfunding campaign currently underway to support additional plantings.

Looking ahead to 2027, more trees and educational signage are planned. Thank you to the BCAA for their continued support and to the community for helping grow a more diverse and resilient fairgrounds for future generations.



Joyce, Linda and John planting the oak tree

Anne Lindseth

Health and Human Services Director

Long Term Storm Recovery Group



Support for Households Impacted by the Derecho

In the wake of the June 21, 2025 derecho that caused widespread damage across the region, community leaders and service organizations joined forces to assist households facing long-term storm recovery challenges. The extensive impacts of the storm quickly made it clear that many residents would need additional support to rebuild and restore their homes and lives.

In response, local public agencies and nonprofit partners established the Long-Term Storm Recovery Group, bringing together key organizations to identify needs, secure resources, and coordinate direct assistance for affected families. A central component of this collaboration was the creation of a dedicated Disaster Case Manager role to work one-on-one with impacted households.

The Long-Term Storm Recovery Group includes representatives from the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, United Way of the Bemidji Area, Community Resource Connections, Justice North, Headwaters Regional Development Commission, Bemidji Fire Department, Sanford Health, Bemidji Pioneer, and Beltrami County.

Through grant funding a Disaster Case Manager has been hired to help residents assess ongoing needs and connect with available resources. Community members can request assistance through an online portal on the United Way website, where they can report continuing issues related to the 2025 storm. After an application is submitted, the Disaster

Case Manager contacts the household to determine what support can be provided.

Through this coordinated effort, the group has delivered a range of services to both individual families and the broader community, ensuring that long-term recovery needs are met with care, efficiency, and collaboration.

As recovery efforts continue, members of the Long-Term Storm Recovery Group remain committed to partnering across agencies to provide direct support and bring additional resources into the region.

Residents who continue to experience storm-related needs from the June 21, 2025 derecho are encouraged to visit the United Way of Bemidji Area website <https://www.unitedwaybemidji.org/disaster-recovery> and select “Get Help.”

The United Way of the Bemidji Area is still actively seeking volunteers who can help with chainsaw work, roof repair, and small home repairs. If you are interested in volunteering, please visit the website at the link above and select “Volunteer”.



Chris Muller

Emergency Management Director

Lessons Learned—Challenges and Best Practices

As the sun rose on a hot, humid Saturday in mid-June, Beltrami County residents began picking up the pieces after a devastating overnight storm. Hurricane-force winds tore through the area, disrupting the quiet of the night. While some were caught off guard, the National Weather Service (NWS) had been warning of a potential high-end wind event for days. Still, the storm proved stronger than anticipated, prompting emergency response partners to use the past year as a learning opportunity to improve preparedness.

Leading up to June 20–21, 2025, the NWS and local emergency managers closely monitored Storm Prediction Center outlooks, which increasingly pointed to a significant wind event across Minnesota. Forecast messaging escalated from early alerts to urgent warnings as conditions worsened.

A recorded wind gust of 106 mph at the Bemidji Regional Airport highlighted the storm’s intensity, though power loss and limited sensor placement suggest peak winds were higher. Post-storm damage assessments conducted by the NWS and Beltrami County Emergency Management indicated gusts may have exceeded 120 mph, particularly in Bemidji and the Mission area. Further review in April 2026, including structural failures reported by homeowners, suggested winds may have reached 130 mph—making it one of the strongest wind events in Minnesota in over a century.

Over the past year, the NWS and local partners have worked to improve how warnings and preparedness messages are delivered. Communicating the risk of rare but severe events remains a challenge, requiring a balance between urgency and avoiding over-alerting. Residents are encouraged to follow trusted sources, including the NWS and local emergency management, for updates and forecasts.

Public feedback also highlighted mixed experiences with emergency notifications. Some residents received too many alerts, while others received none. Officials recommend using a single trusted weather app, enabling Wireless Emergency Alerts, and signing up for Beltrami County’s Ever-bridge notification system.

The storm also exposed challenges with insurance claims. Numerous residents reported difficulties, leading to meetings with the Minnesota Department of Commerce. A listening session with Commissioner Grace Arnold and community members confirmed many concerns, and a task force has been established to address ongoing issues. Residents are encouraged to review their policies and coverage.

Ultimately, the storm reinforced the importance of preparedness. Emergency response in Beltrami County relies on coordinated efforts across local, tribal, and state partners. But individual preparedness is equally critical. Residents are reminded of the “first 72” principle: be ready to sustain yourself and your household for the first three days following a disaster.

Anne Lindseth

Health and Human Services Director

Beltrami County Housing Trust Fund

Advancing Housing Stability and Development

The Beltrami County Housing Trust Fund (HTF), established in late 2023, continues to make significant strides in addressing the county’s growing housing needs. Administered by the United Way of the Bemidji Area since its inception, the HTF has focused its early efforts on building a strong foundation for long-term housing solutions while directing meaningful investments into both community housing programs and housing development projects.

The HTF supports two primary areas of need:

- Community housing programs, which help residents remain in stable housing or secure housing when needed.
- Housing development initiatives, which expand the local housing supply across the full continuum of need.

Progress and Investments in 2025

In 2025, the Housing Trust Fund provided critical support to two local nonprofit organizations dedicated to housing stability, ultimately serving 102 families. These investments helped strengthen local capacity to prevent homelessness and promote long-term stability for households facing housing challenges.

That same year, the HTF awarded funding to Northstar Neighbors, a community land trust initiative committed to increasing affordable homeownership opportunities in Beltrami County. By leveraging both public and private funding, Northstar Neighbors helps low to moderate income families achieve homeownership through shared land ownership and strategic gap financing. Of the ten homes currently supported

through Housing Trust Fund dollars, two have been completed, with four additional homes actively under development.

2026 Funding and Continued Collaboration

In 2026, the Housing Trust Fund issued a second round of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) focused on supporting housing stability. Two local nonprofit agencies were awarded a combined \$49,500 in funding to continue meeting the needs of families across the county.

As development on previously funded projects progresses, the Housing Trust Fund Cabinet remains committed to fostering strong partnerships throughout the community. This includes exploring innovative approaches to expanding the housing supply and advancing new development opportunities through creative public-private collaboration.

Commitment to Community

Beltrami County and the United Way of the Bemidji Area remain dedicated to housing stability, preservation and development of housing, and the continued stewardship and transparency owed to the community.

Residents seeking more information about the Housing Trust Fund are encouraged to contact the United Way of the Bemidji Area. Inquiries related to Northstar Neighbors can be directed to the Northwest Minnesota Foundation.



Charlene Sturk

County Recorder

Property Fraud Alert

Is a Free Service

According to the FBI, Property and Mortgage Fraud is the fastest growing white-collar crime.

For the past decade, property fraud has been one of the fastest growing white-collar crimes in the United States. All it takes is someone recording a fraudulent record saying they own your home or property for you to become a victim. It can often take years for this fraudulent document to be discovered, usually during the process of selling your home.

Property Fraud Alert is a free service that allows home owners to monitor and be notified whenever a document is recorded that matches their details. With early notification, it can significantly save the victim time and money in fixing the issue. To sign-up just go to www.propertyfraudalert.com or call the Beltrami County Recorder’s Office for help signing up.



Josh Arhart

Sherriff’s Deputy

Boating Safety

It Saves Lives

Beltrami County offers excellent lakes and rivers for fishing and recreation, but safety should always come first. Swimmers should be familiar with local waters, as many lakes have deep, sudden drop-offs and rivers can have strong currents. Always supervise children and use life-jackets. Carefully inspect life jackers and replace all damaged or ripped jackets.

Boat launches can be busy, so stay alert for backing trailers, keep clear of lanes, and park only in designated areas while allowing access for emergency vehicles.

On the water, follow all safety laws—carry required equipment such as lifejackets, a throwable device, lights, and a horn. Avoid alcohol or impairing substances while operating a boat. Alcohol is involved in about 30% of fatal oat accidents in Minnesota. Maintain safe distances, watch for wakes, and be cautious of changing water levels, rocks, and submerged hazards.

Have a safe summer, and cooperate with the Sheriff’s Office Boat and Water Division during safety checks.

Merri McCarthy

Lead for Mobile Crisis and EmPATH

Sanford Behavioral Health



Responding to Crisis With Compassion and Hope

Since 2017, Sanford Behavioral Health has proudly provided Mobile Crisis Services to Region 2, serving Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, and Lake of the Woods Counties. This work represents a continuation of crisis response services previously provided by Upper Mississippi Mental Health Center, ensuring uninterrupted access to critical mental health support within our communities. Over the years, Sanford Behavioral Health has remained deeply committed to meeting individuals where they are – both physically and emotionally – during times of acute need.

Sanford Behavioral Health’s Crisis Response Team is comprised of a highly trained and compassionate group of Mental Health Professionals, Mental Health Practitioners, and Peer Support Specialists. Together, they share a common goal: to support individuals during moments of crisis – often the most difficult day of a person’s life – by meeting them with empathy, respect, and hope for the future. You can reach the Crisis Response Team by calling 1-800-422-0045.

The team recognizes that crisis looks different for everyone. Whether an individual is experiencing overwhelming emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, acute anxiety, or other mental health challenges, the Crisis Response Team works to provide immediate, person-centered support focused on safety, stabilization, and connection to ongoing care. Services are provided in a wide range of settings, including homes, schools, public spaces, medical clinics, and emergency rooms.

IN BELTRAMI, CLEARWATER, HUBBARD & LAKE OF THE WOODS COUNTIES, DIRECT ACCESS IS A CALL AWAY			
Sanford Health Crisis Center *Walk-in services available*			
Monday-Friday 9 am-9 pm & Saturday 10 am-5:30 pm			
3220 Hannah Ave, Suite 2, Bemidji (218) 209-3610			
211	(800)422-0045	988	911
NON-EMERGENCIES	MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS & DISTRESS*	SUICIDE & CRISIS	EMERGENCIES
FOOD, HOUSING & SHELTER	SOMEONE TO TALK TO	MENTAL HEALTH DISTRESS	MEDICAL EMERGENCY
SUBSTANCE USE, MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES	EMOTIONAL DISTRESS	THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE	FIRE EMERGENCY
UTILITY ASSISTANCE, DISASTER AFTERCARE	SUBSTANCE USE CRISIS	VETERAN CRISIS RESPONSE	VIOLENT CRIME INCIDENT
HEALTHCARE SERVICE	MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS	ADOLESCENT CRISIS RESPONSE	OVERDOSE EMERGENCY
HOMELESS SERVICES & MNSURE	THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE	MENTAL ILLNESS CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY RESPONSE	DISASTER RESPONSE
RESOURCING CENTER	SUPPORT FOR ADULTS & YOUTH		LIFE-THREATENING SITUATION
	MEET IN THE COMMUNITY, HOME, ER, OR OFFICE		

In 2023, Sanford Behavioral Health expanded its crisis response continuum with the opening of the Emergency Psychiatric Assessment, Treatment, and Healing (EmPATH) Unit. The addition of EmPATH represents a significant step forward in crisis care, offering individuals a safe, therapeutic, and welcoming alternative to emergency rooms when experiencing a mental health emergency. EmPATH offers walk-in based services, groups, and scheduled follow up. It is located at 3220 Hannah Avenue, Suite 2, Bemidji, MN 56601 and can also be reached by calling 218-209-3610.

Bryce Brittain

Health and Human Services, Economic Assistance Program Manager

SNAP Employment and Training Program

Beltrami County Health and Human Services and received funding for expanded opportunities for individuals receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits through the SNAP Employment and Training Program. Recipients can build valuable job skills, explore new career paths, and take meaningful steps toward long-term financial stability.

This voluntary program offers personalized support based on goals. It includes employment training programs, help with possible education costs for up to a two-year program, and assistance with tools, equipment and work clothing. Participants may also have access to paid work experience opportunities to gain hands-on job skills.

Participants will work with the Employment Services/Workforce Impact Team for guidance, planning, and ongoing support during this journey. Call 218-333-8300, option 8, to learn more.

Not a SNAP recipient? Apply today to see about eligibility.



Ehren Inkel

Director of Operations

On the Radar

Construction Season at the Bemidji Regional Airport

Construction season has arrived in Minnesota, and Bemidji Regional Airport is no exception. Crews are nearing completion of the Taxiway A rehabilitation and reconstruction project. This work includes converting the northwest end of Taxiway A from two 45-degree runway entry turns into a single 90-degree turn to meet updated FAA standards. The remainder of the taxiway is receiving a mill and asphalt overlay, along with several major crack repairs.

These improvements will extend the life of Taxiway A for decades and help ensure safe, efficient operations for all aircraft.

Passengers traveling on twice-daily flights with Delta Air Lines should experience minimal disruption, aside from slightly longer taxi times. General aviation users may notice some temporary congestion due to partial taxiway closures. The project began May 4 and is expected to be completed in approximately 45 days.



Lori Clark

Natural Resource Management , Recreation Resource Coordinator



Recreational Facilities Plan

We're excited to announce the next phase of our Recreational Facilities Plan is underway! This spring, five citizen representatives were selected to join a Steering Committee alongside two County Commissioners, Natural Resource Management staff, and local recreation specialists. This group will help guide the process, explore opportunities, and identify ways to enhance our park system and better serve the community.

While the Steering Committee plays an important role, we still need your input. Scan the QR code or visit the Beltrami County website to share your ideas, or email the NRM Department at nrm.beltrami@beltramicountymn.gov. Your feedback is essential in shaping a plan that reflects our community's needs—no idea is too big or too small!

Beltrami County Parks

Summer has arrived, and it's the perfect time to hit the trails and enjoy the picturesque scenery of Beltrami County.

Rognlien Park: South of Wilton, Rognlien Park is a local favorite for families looking for some time out at the lake. The sandy swimming beach is perfect for cooling off, while the kids can burn off energy at the nearby playground. Visitors can enjoy a lakeside picnic, cast a line from the fishing pier, or just take a seat on the grass to take a break from the busy world. With so many ways to unwind and play, Rognlien is a great spot to slow down and enjoy time together.

Movil Maze Recreation Area: Just ten minutes north of Bemidji, Movil Maze is a go-to spot for anyone looking to get out into the woods. With more than 17 miles of trails, there's room for every type of explorer. Mountain bikers can weave through 8 miles of forested singletrack, while walkers and runners have over 9 miles of peaceful, non-motorized multi-use trails to enjoy under the canopy.

A scenic shelter sits at the entrance of the recreation area and is available to rent from April 1 through November 30. It comes equipped with electricity, picnic tables, and a wood stove, making it a great gathering place for groups, events, or family outings. The rental fee is \$75 per day with a refundable \$100 deposit. Applications can be completed online or at the Natural Resource Management office.

Three Island Park: Located twenty minutes north of Bemidji, Three Island Park is a great spot to unwind...whether you relax in a hammock by the Turtle River, splash in the water, or have a quiet lunch. Spanning over 2,900 acres, this natural area features a wide variety of diverse scenery and wildlife. With access from three main trailheads, visitors can easily explore the park's many unique landscapes and experiences.

The rustic shelter here is also available for rent April 1 - November 30 for \$60 per day with a \$100 refundable deposit. It includes picnic tables and a wood stove.

Wilton Trails NW: For riders of all kinds, the Wilton Trails NW system offers more than 30 miles of diverse terrain through forests and rolling landscapes. ATVs, motorcycles, horseback riders, bikers, and hikers all use these trails, so please use proper trail etiquette when recreating. Motorized users should yield to non-motorized trail users and stop and shut off vehicles when meeting horseback riders.

Mississippi High Banks Campsite: This campsite along the Mississippi River in the Bear Den Area is a primitive campsite available only by reservation. The June 2025 storm heavily damaged the campsite and surrounding forest. After cleanup this spring, the campsite will be open and available in the summer of 2026. Check our website at beltramicountymn.gov/living-here/parks-recreation/ to check the status.

With so many places to explore, there's no better time to get out and enjoy your Beltrami County parks. See you on the trails!



Brian Olson

Solid Waste Division Director

NEW Composting Program

Up to 25% of household waste is organic and can be turned into compost instead of going to the landfill, where it becomes contaminated and unrecoverable. By participating in the organics collection program, you can help be part of a long-term solution.

This service is now available through the new Northwest Minnesota 6-County Organics Recycling Program.

This program uses specially designed compostable bags for collecting organic waste. Residents place filled and tied bags in their regular trash carts or dumpsters. At the Polk County

Materials Recovery Facility, robots separate the bags, which are then transported to the Polk County Compost Facility for processing.

By diverting organic materials, composting extends the lifespan of existing landfills, which can save taxpayer dollars and reduce the need for new landfill construction.

Through participation, you help create a system where waste is transformed into a valuable product that goes back into the local ecosystem.

Feed the Earth, not the landfill



For more information and how to participate contact us:

Email: BeltramiCountySolidWaste@gmail.com

Call: (218) 333-8187

Visit our website: beltramicountymn.gov/living-here/garbage-and-recycling/organics



Beryl Wernberg

Beltrami County Fair Board Secretary/Manager

2026 Beltrami County Fair

Is Just Around the Corner—August 12-16

In celebration of America’s 250th anniversary, the Home Arts and Horticulture Departments are introducing several new exhibit lots. Exhibitors are encouraged to create entries that honor our nation’s history, heritage, and spirit—showcasing creativity, vibrant color, and meaningful symbols that reflect the people, traditions, and milestones shaping the United States over the past two and a half centuries. Expect to see plenty of red, white, and blue throughout the fairgrounds!

You’ll also notice several updates this year:

- The Robotics Building has completed construction on Building 14B.
- Parking now includes an added convenience—guests may call the ComCenter at 218-368-4235 during fair hours to request rides to and from locations on the fairgrounds.

Beltrami Electric Night at the Fair returns Wednesday evening, featuring the annual meet-

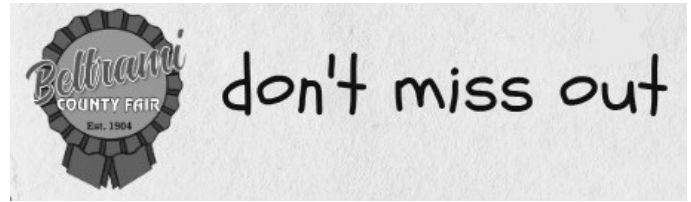
ing at the Shutter Stage. Members who register will receive coupons for fair vendor food. The evening will also include a free concert by the Waddington Brothers Band (sponsored by Beltrami Electric), performing from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Grandstand. After a popular appearance in 2023, the band is excited to return—and audiences can expect another great show.

At Heritage Square, Wednesday evening will feature the Fun on the Farm Magic Show with Farmer Ray, designed especially for children, with performances at 4:15 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Throughout the fair, Heritage Square and the Fine Arts areas will host a Pop-Up Art event showcasing local artists, the Bemidji Wood Carvers, and the Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited, offering hands-on fly-tying and casting experiences. The Fine Arts Division in the Commercial Building will also feature demonstrations from the Headwaters Quilt Guild and Honor Quilts.

Our barns and livestock events will include sheep, rabbits, beef, dairy, goats, swine, poultry, and horses. Be sure to visit the Kiddie Barn and Ted’s Barnyard for family-friendly fun. The Commercial Building will be filled with vendors, and the Midway will offer rides and entertainment for all ages.

On Sunday afternoon, join us at the Grandstand for the “Battle of the Barrel,” where local fire departments compete in a lively, historic contest dating back to the 19th century. Teams use fire hoses to push a suspended barrel along an overhead cable, competing for a trophy and local bragging rights. We hope this exciting event becomes a lasting Beltrami County tradition—come cheer on your local fire department and enjoy the spirited competition!

We look forward to a fantastic fair filled with great food, fun events, and inspiring exhibits. We hope to see you there!



You can find the on-line form on the County website beltramicountymn.gov and navigating to Living Here > Addressing > Report a damaged or missing address sign.

Or scan the QR code



Is your address sign damaged or missing?

Let us know and we'll fix it for you!



Amy Bowles

Public Health Director

What’s Happening in Public Health

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program provides nutrition support, food, and health resources for low-income pregnant women, new mothers, and children up to age 5. This evidence-based program is proven to improve birth outcomes and child health.

This summer, WIC is offering fun learning opportunities:

- Grow Your Own – Families can receive supplies to grow vegetables for homemade salsa.
- Cooking Made Easy – Six free classes remain; participants take home ingredients and a kitchen item.

Call 218-333-8140 or visit the public health website to learn more.

Immunizations are available with no appointment necessary on Mondays from 1:00–4:00 p.m. at the Family Health Clinic (616 America

Ave NW, Suite 130). Services are available for all ages. Call 218-333-8140 for an appointment.

The Family Home Visiting Program supports pregnant women and families with young children through home visits focused on physical, social, and emotional well-being. Staff provide guidance, resources, and referrals to help families create healthy environments and strong futures for their children.

Community Funding, under the direction of the Beltrami County Board of Commissioners, up to \$70,000 will be distributed among four community partners through the RFP process for Opioid Settlement Dollars. A public listening session to share progress and impact will be held October 20 at 6:00 p.m.

2026 WIC Cooking Made Easy

HARMONY CO-OP COMMUNITY KITCHEN 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

CALL BELTRAMI COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH TO SIGN UP @ 218-333-8140

January 16 th	Crockpot Cooking
February 20 th	Exploring Homemade Soups
March 20 th	Healthy Snacks
April 17 th	Homemade Cream Soup Mix
May 15 th	Cooking with Herbs
June	***No class this month***
July 17 th	Fun with Fruit Pizza
August 21 st	Fresh Salsa
September 18 th	Homemade Muffins
October 16 th	Homemade Baking Mix
November 20 th	Let's make chili!
December 18 th	Exploring Dips



Each participant will leave with something to take home!



This Institution is an Equal Opportunity Provider.

Tom Barry
County Administrator

From Bonding to Budget Cuts

Key Takeaways from the 2026 Legislative Session

The 2026 legislative session concluded May 18th after House and Senate leaders reached a series of bipartisan agreements. Lawmakers approved a \$1.2 billion infrastructure bonding bill, IT modernization funding, hospital stabilization aid, and affordability measures including expanded property tax refunds and a one-time rollback of license tab fees. They also passed anti-fraud initiatives, highlighted by the creation of an independent Office of Inspector General, along with smaller policy changes involving prediction markets, youth social media use, and nutrition.

Leaders also approved roughly \$300 million in Human Services cuts, including \$150 million in ongoing reductions, as part of a broader effort to address future budget pressures. Several contentious proposals failed to advance, including gun control legislation, immigration and small business relief measures, and GOP-backed tax changes. Much of the final budget language, particularly on Human Services and HHS, was negotiated behind closed doors and released the night before the session's end.

For counties, lawmakers approved several county-focused funding measures this session, including \$10.7 million in one-time funding for counties to help cover SNAP administrative costs in fiscal year 2027. Counties will receive funding based on their share of SNAP-related expenses. The Legislature also approved \$15 million in one-time funding to help counties implement the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act. Funding will be distributed

using a formula tied to child population, child maltreatment reports, and active child protection cases, with every county receiving at least \$100,000. However, lawmakers did not delay the law's implementation date as some counties had requested. Although the additional funding is welcomed, it will not cover the substantial additional costs to administer these programs.

Some Beltrami County-specific proposals failed to advance, including an economically disadvantaged county carveout, increased county cost-sharing for direct care and treatment services, windstorm recovery assistance, property insurance reform, and disaster repair tax refunds. Efforts to delay parts of the State's new age-of-delinquency law also failed. Collectively, these initiatives represent a multimillion-dollar economic impact for the county. Other Beltrami County issues, including ICWA/MIFPA case reviews, insurance reforms, and demolition landfill regulations, remain ongoing and are expected to return during future legislative sessions.

The 2026 legislative session ended Monday, May 18, with several retirement speeches. Notably, 42 lawmakers are not seeking re-election.



Chris Muller
Emergency Management Director

The Jail—New & Old

Construction of the new Beltrami County Jail in Bemidji's Industrial Park remains on schedule, with completion expected in 2027. The new facility will enhance efficiency and safety for both staff and inmates. Meanwhile, the current jail continues to operate effectively, adapting to regulatory changes and operational demands imposed by the Department of Corrections.

On May 13, 2026, the Minnesota Department of Corrections conducted its annual inspection alongside county staff. The facility received a favorable report with no violations, demonstrating strong compliance with state standards despite past building and staffing challenges.

Sheriff Jason Riggs praised corrections staff for their dedication to maintaining safe and professional operations. Governed by Minnesota Rule 2911, the jail meets strict requirements for safety, supervision, and documentation. Continued compliance reflects the team's commitment as they prepare for the transition to the new facility.

Board of Commissioners	
District 1—Craig Gaasvig	218-766-9699
District 2—Joe Gould	218-259-4342
District 3—Scott Winger	218-556-7589
District 4—Tim Sumner	218-407-7589
District 5—John Carlson	218-766-5010
Administration Building	
701 Minnesota Ave NW Bemidji MN 56601	
Administrator—Thomas Barry	218-333-4109
Assessor—Kaleb Bessler	218-333-4116
Auditor/Treasurer—JoDee Treat	218-333-4175
Environmental Services	
Brent Rud.....	218-333-4158
Facilities Manager Steve Shadrick	.218-333-8475
Geographic Info Systems (GIS).	
Kevin Trappe	218-333-8457
Human Resources	
Jordan Hickman.....	218-333-4155
License Center.....	218-333-4148
Information Technology (IT)	
Kevin Warne.....	218-333-4151
Natural Resource Management	
Shane Foley	218-333-4210
Real Estate & Tax Services.....	218-333-4138
Recorder—Charlene Sturk.....	218-333-4170
Community Service Center	
616 America Ave NW, Bemidji MN 56601	
Health & Human Services	
Director Anne Lindseth.....	218-333-4195
Social Services Division Director	
Jeff Lind	218-333-4196
Economic Assistance Division Director	
Curt Anderson.....	218-333-4199
Public Health Division Director	
Amy Bowles.....	218-333-8116
Veterans Services Officer	
Shane Gustafson.....	218-333-4192
Law Enforcement Center	
613 Minnesota Ave NW, Bemidji MN 56601	
Sheriff Jason Riggs.....	218-333-9111
Bemidji Police Chief Mike Mastin 218-333-9111	
Judicial Center	
600 Minnesota Ave NW, Bemidji MN 56601	
Attorney—David Hanson.....	218-333-4219
Court Administration	
	218-888-5060
County Jail	
626 Minnesota Ave NW, Bemidji MN 56601	
Main phone number	218-333-4189
Public Works Department	
2491 Adams Ave NW, Bemidji MN 56601	
Public Works Director	
Bruce Hasbargen.....	218-333-8173
751 Industrial Park Dr SE	
Solid Waste Director	
Brian Olson	218-333-8187
County Extension	
7223 Fairgrounds Rd NW, Bemidji MN 56601	
Extension Secretary	218-444-5722



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