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Date: Oct. 16, 2018
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Oct. 16, 2018, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

Oknich appointed to Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

The Washington County Board of Commissioners appointed Jen Oknich, Scandia, to the Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District board Oct. 16.

Oknich was appointed to serve a first term expiring Sept. 21, 2021.

Watershed district governance, required by state law, helps to control or alleviate damage by flood waters; improves stream channels for drainage or navigation; reclaims or fills wet or overflow lands; oversees water supply for irrigation; regulates the flow of streams; diverts or changes water courses; provides and conserves water supply; and provides for the protection of groundwater and regulation of groundwater use.

Contact: Yvonne Klinnert, Public Information Manager, 651-430-6026

County's WorkForce Center will receive grant to work with 'legacy' workers

The Washington County WorkForce Center will receive a \$135,000 grant from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development to implement a pilot program called "Minnesota's Legacy Force."

The County Board approved the grant agreement Oct. 16.

The federal Department of Labor selected the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic

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Equal Employment Opportunity / Affirmative Action

Development (DEED) to submit a proposal to develop a program to assist unemployed, low-income individuals 55 years old and older to find sustainable employment. Minnesota was selected by the Department of Labor for the project because of its high performance with other workforce programs for senior adults.

Washington County is one of four workforce areas in the state to receive the grant.

The project will focus primarily on targeted services and employer engagement to improve and expand the capacity of the state's public workforce system. The model uses career navigators who create customized plans based on the unique needs of each person and provide intensive one-on-one case management and support.

The grant runs from June 22 to Oct. 22, 2020.

Contact: Rick Roy, WorkForce Center Division Manager, 651-275-8660

County Board approves agreement between Sheriff's Office, DEA

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an agreement between the county's Sheriff's Office and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Oct. 16 to help staff a task force that focuses on large-scale illegal drug operations.

This DEA Task Force is housed at DEA headquarters in Minneapolis and investigates high-level street narcotics distribution. The DEA provides equipment, office space, and technical and administrative aid, and covers overtime costs up to \$18,343 for a Sheriff's Office deputy.

The contract runs from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30, 2019.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

Sheriff's Office will continue to provide law enforcement to City of Newport

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will continue to provide law enforcement services to the City of Newport, after the County Board approved a contract Oct. 16 with the city that runs through 2019 and 2020.

The county will supply all necessary labor, supervision, administration, equipment, communication facilities and dispatching, and supplies for the services. The City of Newport will pay the county the

direct costs of the law enforcement services, including the full-time services of one sergeant and five deputies.

The agreement will automatically renew for one-year periods following the initial two-year term, up to a maximum of five years.

The City of Newport began contracting with the Washington County Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services Jan. 1, 2016. That contract expires Dec. 31.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601

County will create on-site clinic to reduce health insurance costs

Washington County will house an on-site health clinic to reduce health insurance costs for employees, after the County Board approved an agreement with health insurer HealthPartners Oct. 16.

Washington County will work with HealthPartners to open and operate an on-site health clinic at the Stillwater Government Center campus. The clinic would be another initiative to improve the health of county employees and control the rising cost of health insurance. The clinic would be open to county employees covered under the employer's health plan, retirees covered under the employer's health plan, and the spouses and dependents of employees and retirees who are covered under the employer's health plan.

The clinic would be open 40 hours per week.

The county has a five-year contract with HealthPartners health insurance, which began in 2015. The county will be rebidding health insurance in 2019 for insurance starting in 2020. The renewal with HealthPartners for 2019 included a 2 percent premium reduction in the increase if the county opened an on-site clinic. An on-site clinic should:

- provide “hard” savings with greater control over direct costs, such as office visits, non-generic prescriptions; and other services;
- provide “soft” savings from reduced absenteeism; improved use of preventative care; improved disease management; and the attraction and retention of employees; and
- complement the county’s wellness programs and initiatives.

HealthPartners will manage and staff the clinic, manage patient electronic medical records, schedule patients, and process insurance claims. The county will be responsible for providing and preparing the space for the clinic.

The 2 percent reduction in premiums for 2019 is expected to be \$302,000.

Contact: Jan Webster, Human Resources Director, 651-430-6075

County Board approves agreement with DNR for Highway36/Hadley interchange

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Oct. 16 to oversee construction of a grade-separated interchange at Highway 36 and Hadley Avenue in Oakdale.

Washington County is leading the construction of a grade-separated interchange at the intersection. The project includes a grade-separated tunnel underpass of the Gateway Trail at Hadley Avenue, which is being funded by the DNR through federal and state funds. To build the new interchange, the Gateway State Trail underpass must be accommodated. To ensure consistency and success of the project, Washington County has agreed to be the project sponsor for the \$1.1 million in federal funding that was secured by the DNR. The agreement sets out the funding reimbursement, long-term maintenance, and property access/ownership for the project.

The interchange has 33,000 vehicles travel through it each day; it is forecasted to have 43,300 vehicles per day in 2040. The crash severity at the intersection is twice that of other highways in the metro area. It is expected that construction on the \$26.3 million project will begin next March, and be complete in fall 2020.

Contact: Kevin Peterson, Engineer, 651-430-4330

County Board accepts Towards Zero Deaths grant

The Washington County Board of Commissioners accepted a \$201,060 grant Oct. 16 from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety, to be used by the county's Sheriff's Office for traffic enforcement.

The Towards Zero Deaths grant dollars will be used to reimburse overtime costs associated with traffic enforcement involving driving while intoxicated (DWI), distracted drivers, speed, and seat belt

use. The grant will cover work performed by the Washington County Sheriff's Office and the police departments of Stillwater, Bayport, Woodbury, Forest Lake, Oak Park Heights, Cottage Grove, and St. Paul Park.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office will be the fiscal agent for the grant, which runs through Sept. 30, 2019.

Contact: Sheriff Dan Starry, 651-430-7601