

Our Mission: Providing quality services through responsible leadership, innovation and the cooperation of dedicated people

Date: March 7, 2023
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the March 7, 2023, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota.

County will sell fuel to Oak Park Heights' law enforcement through state contract

Washington County will sell fuel to the City of Oak Park Heights for use in law enforcement vehicles through the county's state contract, after the County Board approved an agreement with the city March 7.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office has a contract with the state for the Fixed Fuel Program for participants in the metropolitan area. The Sheriff's Office will provide up to 750 gallons of gasoline per month to the City of Oak Park Heights for \$2.5688 per gallon, plus applicable fees and taxes. If the monthly usage and rate exceeds the agreement terms, the city will be responsible for paying a higher rate if the county is charged a higher rate to procure the fuel.

The contract runs from Feb. 1, 2023, through Jan. 31, 2024.

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Schaefer receives 30 Under 30 designation

Connor Schaefer, senior planner for Washington County Public Works, was recently named by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) as a 30 Under 30 winner, recognizing young professionals.

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Washington County is an equal opportunity organization and employer

Each year, the NRPA recognizes 30 recreation professionals who are making profound impacts in their communities and the field of parks and recreation. All nominees must be 30 years old or younger.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners congratulated Schaefer on his award at its meeting March 7. He has been with Washington County since 2016, and over the years has been the primary planner working with the county's parks division. Schaefer has led multiple park master plans, including Central Greenway Trail and Square Lake Park.

NRPA shared that there were more than 100 outstanding nominations from 28 states for the award. The list of 30 Under 30 winners has been released in the February edition of Parks and Recreation magazine. The magazine entry on Schaefer noted that he leads projects to improve Washington County's growing park and trail system, including master plans, policy initiatives, and project funding.

The magazine noted that Schaefer works to connect communities of underrepresented populations, specifically people of color, first-generation immigrants, people with disabilities, low-income community members, and adults ages 65 and older by tailoring engagement strategies to meet the needs and goals of the project and community.

Schaefer also designed a new funding approach to help park agencies address equity issues in parks and trail systems.

Award winners are selected based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Impact on the agency's community and service population.
- Contributions to the professional development of the field of parks and recreation.
- Innovative ideas, programs or research in the field of parks and recreation.



Connor Schaefer, senior planner for Washington County, with county commissioners Fran Miron, District 1, Gary Kriesel, District 3, Stan Karwoski, District 2, Karla Bigham, District 4, and Michelle Clasen, District 5, and Public Works staff.

County receives state engineers' association award for Highway 36/Manning project

Washington County has received an award from the Minnesota County Engineers Association for its work on the interchange at Highway 36 and Manning Avenue.

The County Board accepted the award March 7.

The Manning interchange, built where the cities of Stillwater, Oak Park Heights, Lake Elmo, and Grant, and Stillwater Township converge, has dramatically changed the landscape, improved connectivity, and eliminated a dangerous intersection. It also has opened up possibilities for economic development in and around the interchange, as well as a future option for a regional trail connection that might someday link three regional parks and two regional trails.

The award from the engineers' association noted that the interchange received the Project of the Year Award, according to Brian Pogodzinski, president of the association. The project that receives that award must be noteworthy in one or more of the following areas:

- Unique design characteristics.
- Environmental considerations.
- Community relations and public involvement.
- Construction management.
- Unusual accomplishments under adverse conditions.
- Safety performance during construction.

The primary purpose of the Highway 36/Manning Avenue project was to increase safety and capacity in the area, and improve pedestrian and bicyclist mobility within the area.

Washington County was the lead agency of the project, which involved the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the cities and township, the Metropolitan Council, and the watershed district.

The project involved relocating a major electric transmission line, placing bridge beams over a major trunk highway at night, and constructing a temporary road to an adjacent neighborhood.

Pogodzinski noted the unique aspect of the stormwater treatment system in the project, that provided a water reuse system for an adjacent golf course. The system will treat 935,000 cubic feet of water a year, increase the phosphorus removal at a rate five times greater than a traditional system, and reduces the golf course's use of groundwater.

At the March 7 meeting, Public Works Director Wayne Sandberg thanked the partners in the project, including:

- Shafer Contracting and Lunda Construction, which worked closely with the county to maintain high quality and an aggressive schedule, while keeping costs in line with budget.
- Browns Creek Watershed District, which developed a stormwater re-use system in the interchange.
- SRF Consulting, WSB Consulting, and Braun Intertec Consulting Firms, which provided expertise and skill in developing plans, specifications, testing, and oversight.
- The cities of Grant, Stillwater, Lake Elmo, Oak Park Heights, and Stillwater Township, for their support of the project, both in concept and for some financial support.

- County staff, from Public Works engineers, designers, planners, surveyors, accountants, construction, traffic and right of way staff – all working together to deliver this project.
- State and federal policy makers, including Sen. Karin Housley, Rep. Shelley Christensen, U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, U.S. Sen. Tina Smith, and U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum, and many others who helped support and fund this project.
- The local business community and the residents who tolerated two years of construction, especially Aamodt’s Apple Orchard, which graciously hosted the county on multiple occasions before and during construction.
- The County Board, which provides funding for these large projects and support and trust in the county staff to engage the community, represent the county, and deliver capital projects on its behalf.



Washington County receives the Project of the Year award from the Minnesota County Engineers Association for its work on the Manning Avenue and Highway 36 interchange. Brian Pogodzinski, president of the association, far right, presented the award to the County Board March 7, along with the Public Works staff who worked on the project.