

Our Mission: We strive to provide exceptional services that enhance quality of life and promote a safe, healthy, and welcoming community for all.

Date: Feb. 18, 2025
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Feb. 18, 2025, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota.

Chair, vice chair elected to Regional Railroad Authority for 2025

The Washington County Board of Commissioners Commissioner, sitting as the Regional Rail Authority, elected Commissioner Michelle Clasen, District 5, as the Washington County Regional Railroad Authority chair for 2025 at the authority's organizational meeting Feb. 18. Commissioner Karla Bigham, District 4, was elected vice chair.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners sits as the Regional Railroad Authority to conduct business for that governmental entity.

Contact: Tina Elam, Communications Manager, 651-430-6004 (office), 651-592-5989 (after hours)

County Board approves contract for website redesign

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$283,875 contract Feb. 18 with Bright Penny Creative, LLC to redesign the county's website.

Under the contract, Bright Penny Creative, LLC project will implement the recommendations from a comprehensive website evaluation that was completed in April 2024. These recommendations include:

- Auditing the website to remove outdated and redundant information.
- Redesigning navigation menus and webpages to make it easier for users to navigate and find the information they need.
- Implementing design principles to meet and maintain federal accessibility standards.

Implementing the recommendations of the comprehensive website evaluation will create a visually engaging, responsive, and inviting website that meets community needs.

Contact: Tina Elam, Communications Manager, 651-430-6004 (office), 651-592-5989 (after hours)

County Board approves contract with Wells Fargo for banking services

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract with Wells Fargo for banking services Feb. 18.

The contract term is for five years and expires Feb. 28, 2030. Banking services under the contract include, but are not limited to, general banking operations, disbursements, and deposits. The contract's total fees are expected to be greater than \$175,000.

The existing contract for the county's banking services expired Feb. 10, 2025. The county released a request for proposals in October 2024 from qualified financial institutions. Proposals were received from First Resource Bank, Huntington Bank, JP Morgan, U.S. Bank, Royal Credit Union, and Wells Fargo. Wells Fargo demonstrated the highest degree of responsiveness to the RFP requirements, including competitive pricing and efficient and secure banking transactions and services.

Contact: Cat Piepho, Accounting and Finance Director, 651-430-6027

County Board approves liquor license applications

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved two renewal liquor licenses Feb. 18.

The County Board approved the renewal of an on-sale, off-sale, and Sunday liquor license for the Stoneridge Golf Club Inc. located in West Lakeland Township. The board also approved the renewal of an on-sale and Sunday liquor license for the Disabled Veteran's Rest Camp Association located in May Township.

The county processes all liquor licenses for the townships in the county. The county reviews the liability insurance, and the Sheriff's Office, the County Attorney's Office, and the Public Health & Environment Department complete compliance/verification checks.

Those requirements have all been completed for the applications. The applicants' license fees pay for the administrative cost of the county's administration, compliance, and verification checks.

Contact: Christine Piskura, Taxpayer Services and Election Division Manager, 651-430-8272

County enters cooperative agreement with Woodbury for water main improvements

Water main improvements along three county highways in Woodbury will move forward after Washington County entered into a cooperative agreement with the city Feb. 18.

The City of Woodbury is installing new underground water main pipes along County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 16 (Valley Creek Rd.), CSAH 13 (Radio Dr.), and CSAH 18 (Bailey Rd.) as part of the construction of a new permanent water treatment plant to address Poly-Fluoroalkyl (PFAS) in the water supply.

The construction of these water mains will result in significant impacts to the existing roadways, requiring a cooperative agreement between the city and county. Washington County staff have worked closely with the city and their consultants over the last 24 months to plan and review project impacts, construction schedules, and traffic control plans. The city will fund the construction of the water main improvements and manage contractors. The city will also be leading all construction communications for the project and has a website set up dedicated to informing the public about the project schedules, upcoming traffic control changes, and related construction updates.

There is no cost to the county for this work.

Contact: Ryan Hoefs, Engineer II, 651-430-4336

County enters cooperative agreement with MnDOT for I-94 and Radio Dr. traffic control improvements

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a cooperative cost share agreement with Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for a traffic control signal system improvement project in Woodbury Feb. 18.

The project will improve pedestrian mobility and access for crossing County State Aid Highway 13 (Radio Dr.) at the south Interstate 94 (I-94) interchange ramps. This work includes installation of a raised

concrete pedestrian refuge, marked pedestrian crossing, and significant traffic control signal system upgrades.

Washington County and MnDOT jointly own this traffic signal system. Design and planning will be funded by MnDOT. The total estimated construction cost of the project is \$821,757. The county portion of this cost is estimated to be \$381,871 and will be provided by Highway State Aid funds.

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

Woodbury student recognized for winning Fourth Congressional District App Challenge

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized Idrees Ahmad of Woodbury Feb. 18 for winning the 2024 Fourth Congressional District App Challenge. The contest was sponsored by the office of Congresswoman Betty McCollum.

Ahmad was presented with a Washington County Commissioner Service Award for his app, MinnVotes, which is designed to boost voter turnout among young voters and students by helping users develop and build a plan to vote.

The Congressional App Challenge is a nationwide science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) competition for middle and high school students.

Contact: Tina Elam, Communications Manager, 651-430-6004 (office), 651-592-5989 (after hours)

Photo Cutline: Woodbury student Idrees Ahmad (third from left) holds a Washington County Commissioner Service Award for his app MinnVotes. He is joined (left to right) by County Commissioners Karla Bigham, Bethany Cox, Fran Miron, Michelle Clasen, and Stan Karwoski.

Public hearing held, board approves state review of Washington County Groundwater Plan 2025-2035

The Washington County Board of Commissioners held a public hearing on the county's 2025-2035 Groundwater Plan Feb. 18.

Two people made comments during the public hearing. Following the public hearing, the County Board approved the submittal of the draft Groundwater Plan for further review. The draft plan will now be sent to the Metropolitan Council, state agencies, and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resource for final review.

State law allows metropolitan counties to prepare, adopt, and implement Groundwater Plans. Plans are updated every 10 years and are comprehensive documents that lay out technical information, issues, goals, and strategies to address existing and future groundwater topics and concerns. Washington County relies fully on groundwater for drinking water. Challenges to groundwater management include competing interests and groundwater contamination.

Washington County adopted its first Groundwater Plan in 2003. A second-generation plan was adopted in September 2014 and expires in August 2025. The county's 2025-2035 Groundwater Plan was released for a 60-day public comment period prior to the public hearing.

Contact: Stephanie Souter, Senior Community/Environmental Health Program Manager, 651-430-6701

Environmental Impact Statement required for Holcim Larson Quarry Expansion

The Washington County Board of Commissioners is requiring an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed expansion of the Holcim Larson Quarry. The declaration was made Feb. 18.

Holcim—MWR, Inc. (formerly Aggregate Industries) plans to expand its limestone quarry eastward onto a 148-acre property east of County Road 75. The quarry has been operating under a county permit since the 1950s.

To assess the potential environmental impact, Holcim and the county completed an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), a state-required review for projects that exceed certain thresholds. The EAW was finalized in November 2024 and opened for public comment from Dec. 3, 2024, to Jan. 17, 2025. A public meeting was also held on Jan. 9, 2025.

The EAW results can lead to two outcomes: a negative declaration, meaning no further review is needed, or a positive declaration, requiring an EIS. After reviewing the EAW and public comments, the

County Board determined that an EIS is needed due to potential environmental effects. The decision was based on state criteria, including consideration of:

- The type, extent, and reversibility of potential significant environmental impacts.
- The cumulative potential of environmental effects for the project.
- Whether environmental effects are subject to mitigation by an ongoing public regulator authority.
- Whether environmental effects can be anticipated and controlled as a result of other environmental studies undertaken by public agencies and the project proposed.

Key concerns for the proposed project included the potential loss of important vegetation, as highlighted by the Department of Natural Resources and the National Park Service. The Prairie Island Indian Community and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council also requested further archaeological studies, which cannot be completed until after winter.

The County Board's decision ensures a more detailed environmental review. Holcim must also update its EAW with new data, including PFAS analysis. A Findings of Fact document will summarize the process and responses to public comments. The EIS will be conducted according to Minnesota state rules.

Permit review or evaluation approvals will follow after the environmental review is complete.

Contact: Lyssa Leitner, Public Works Planning Director, 651-430-4316

Arnt Construction Company, Inc. to do tree clearing, grading for 58th Street connection project

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract for \$568,314.27 with Arnt Construction Company, Inc. Feb 18 to do tree clearing and grading for the 58th St. Extension/County Highway 15 South Segment project.

Washington County has been planning for a frontage road to bridge the gap along County Road 15 (58th St.) on the south side of Trunk Highway (TH) 36. This connection was identified through the planning of

the Manning Interchange that was constructed in 2022. The 58th St. Extension/County Highway 15 South Segment project is slated for construction in 2025.

Grading at this stage in the project will allow for the material to settle and stabilize prior to the roadway construction, as well as provide the City of Stillwater the space to extend utilities to serve future development. This early work will also allow trees to be cleared ahead of the summer roosting season for the northern long-eared bats. Bids were opened on Jan. 28 with Arnt Construction Company, Inc. coming in with the lowest of 21 bids.

Contact: Ryan Hoefs, Engineer II, 651-430-4336

MSA Professional Services, Inc. to do pavement preservation on Valley Creek Road in Woodbury

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a \$349,575 contract with MSA Professional Services, Inc. for the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 16 Pavement Preservation Project Feb. 18.

Construction from Century Ave. to Bielenberg Dr. will occur in 2026 or 2027 and will include:

- Pavement improvement and trail rehabilitation.
- Curb and gutter and median removal and replacement.
- Traffic signal system evaluation.
- Evaluation of new trail segment (Queens to Bielenberg).

Contact: Sydney Arkell, Engineer I, 651-430-4317

March declared Women’s History Month in Washington County

The Washington County Board of Commissioners declared the month of March as Women’s History Month in Washington County Feb. 18.

In its declaration, the board recognized the achievements and contributions of women educators, mentors, and leaders in the county.

March is National Women’s History Month, and the National Women’s History Alliance has designated the theme for Women’s History Month 2025 as “Moving Forward Together! Women Educating &

Inspiring Generations.” This theme celebrates the collective strength and influence of women who have dedicated their lives to education, mentorship, and leadership, and who, through their efforts, have served as an inspiration for all generations — both past and present.

Contact: Erin Clarkowski, Engineer II, 651-430-4384