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Date: 10/16/2025 9:54:22 PM

Subject: Courtesy Copy: The Gray Blog - employee news and updates

WARNING: External email. Please verify sender before opening attachments or clicking on links.

This is a courtesy copy of an email bulletin sent by Dana Kazel.

This bulletin was sent to the following groups of people:

Subscribers of Internal News Recap (4 recipients)



October 16, 2025

This has been a week!

Federal government shutdown

I want to start by thanking our incredible PHHS team for their extra effort to serve our residents as impacts have

This week's headlines

[Records detail 2-week hunt for NERCC escapee](#)

emerged from the federal government shut down.

On very short notice, we learned that no new or pending SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) cases could be approved starting today because the program would run out of funding. (And if the shutdown continues, November SNAP benefits will not be issued on any case.)

In response, several financial workers volunteered to stay late, some as late as 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday, to ensure pending SNAP applications were processed without impact.



Shown above are just some of outstanding workers (Back row L to R): Lindsey Bubacz, Jesse Quick and Gina Socha; and front row: Danielle Johnson, Imijyn Thompson, Cindy Moe.

They, along with financial workers from different teams in different offices (plus supervisors and support staff) showed hard work and commitment. Together, they reviewed 245 cases and personally contacted over 120 individuals with pending applications to request the necessary documents for timely processing.

Outstanding teamwork and dedication to support the individuals and families we serve! Thank you all!

And special thanks to Dusty Letica - for sharing the photo above, and for doing a great job helping inform the public about these impacts.

[- Duluth News Tribune](#)

[Former Vikings great Daunte Culpepper shares his story to support kids in foster care - WDIO.com](#)

[First responders dispatched to barn fire in Meadowlands Township - WDIO.com](#)

[Structure deemed total loss after fire in North Star Township - Northern News Now](#)

[Man hospitalized after lone-vehicle crash in Greenwood Township - WDIO.com](#)



Dusty has done multiple media interviews (such as the one above) as well as presentations to community groups. Here are a few news stories that already aired, with more expected in this evening's newscasts:

[SNAP Benefits Being Impacted by the Federal Government Shutdown - Fox21Online](#)

[Federal government shutdown impacting SNAP benefit recipients - WDIO.com](#)

Public Health staff are also working hard to serve affected families and - among other things - compiled a list of food resources for families in need as part of this news release: [St. Louis County provides updates as Federal government shutdown temporarily impacts SNAP benefit approvals.](#)

And late breaking - thanks to Briggs Kaitchuck and Jesse Murray for launching this new information page on our website: [2025 Federal Government Shutdown Impacts](#)

County Board meeting updates

We had a full agenda this week in front of a large crowd. Some good news stories that didn't get a lot of attention include:

- Authorizing a historic Joint Powers Agreement with Bois Forte and the State to provide Home and Community Based Services to tribal members, their families and the community. (Thanks to Terry McCabe for the hard work these past four years in developing relationships and bringing this agreement to fruition, and to Bois Forte's leadership for their vision that started this

- all.)
- Approving an agreement with Koochiching County so their waste can be brought to our landfill, further emphasizing the regional solution that we provide.
- Issuing a proclamation for...

Operation Green Light

Huge thanks to Veterans Service Office Director Nadine Wells and her team for their advocacy on this! This is the second year we have led efforts to shine green lights during the week of Nov. 4-11 as a show of support for Veterans as they transition from military to civilian life.



Shown above are some key team members representing a range of staff and community partners who work to support veterans who are struggling. L-R are: Tom Florestano, Arrowhead Regional Corrections probation officer; Truman Fairchild, PHHS Veterans Social Worker; Paul Pedersen, MACV; and Nadine Wells.

(I also grabbed a selfie with many of them, plus Deputy Administrator Linnea Mirsch)



Thank you, all, for your advocacy on behalf of the more than 13,000 veterans who live in SLC!

Want to get involved and display some green lights during the week leading up to Veterans Day? Here are the details: [St. Louis County encourages people to turn on a green light in support of veterans](#)

NDA's

I'm sure you've all seen headlines about this week's board meeting and the topic of NDAs (non disclosure agreements). While the Board chose not to address the issue at this time, I want to acknowledge the strong feelings of all involved, including the citizens who attended the meeting.)

Here is a sampling of news articles for those who may not be aware (I'm including links to websites that don't require subscriptions to view):

[Topics Of Transparency, NDAs Take Over St. Louis County Board Meeting - Fox21Online](#)

[St. Louis County Commissioner, business leader respond to criticism over data center NDAs - Northern News Now](#)

Celebrating landmark years of service

We have 50 colleagues marking "Workiversaries" this month! Click on the image below to enlarge it. And please join me in congratulating anyone on the list that you know.

October Workiversaries



<p><u>1 Year</u></p> <p>ARC Micah Avery Chad Bryant</p> <p>Attorney Angel Ricker</p> <p>PHHS Holly Ayster Melissa Bjork Ashley Casey Grace Elmudesi Jennifer Faint Elizabeth Flanders Bailey Gandy Kaitlyn Gewerth Taylor Jones Jenika Keup David Olds Emily Olson Jamie Osterheim Marlo Roy Hanna Sandberg Jesse Stevens Hattie Walker Keeley Walstrom Stephanie Zanmiller</p> <p>Public Works Nathaniel Dostert Montana Johnson</p> <p>Sheriff Beau Davidson</p>	<p><u>5 Years</u></p> <p>Public Works Brent Lee</p> <p>Sheriff Tammy Anderson Krysten Selhorst Char Thompson</p> <p><u>10 Years</u></p> <p>ARC Amanda Luoma Samantha Stachovich</p> <p>Assessor Ryan Sauve</p> <p>PHHS Sandra Daniels-Milton Brissa Gunderson Heather Johnson Nicole Knaffla Elizabeth Privette Kendra Robinson Diane Swanson</p> <p>Property Management Jack Borin</p> <p>Public Works Cory Garden</p>	<p><u>15 Years</u></p> <p>ARC Brittany Johnson</p> <p>PHHS Lisa Salo</p> <p><u>20 Years</u></p> <p>Auditor Angela Patullo</p> <p>PHHS Theresa Hillinski</p> <p>Property Management Scott Hudson</p> <p><u>25 Years</u></p> <p>Auditor Christen Christensen</p> <p>Property Management Sara Downing</p> <p><u>30 Years</u></p> <p>Land-Minerals Jason Meyer</p> <p><u>35 Years</u></p> <p>Auditor Brenda George</p>
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Thank you to each and every one of you for your continued contributions. There is so much important institutional knowledge represented here through the range of services you all provide!

Finally re-opened!

Unexpected issues that were discovered mid-project meant the parking ramp project took twice as long as expected. But finally this week, the Third Street Ramp (that connects by skywalk to the rear of our Courthouse in Duluth) has reopened.



For the employees whose parking spots were impacted during this maintenance and resurfacing project - thank you for your patience and understanding.

Worth noting - a portion of the 4th level (metered public parking) is still closed as work continues. So of course please use extra caution if exiting from that level when workers are present.

Central Range Transportation Facility update

We put out a news release this week announcing the Environmental Assessment Worksheet is now available for public review/comment regarding our new Public Works campus in Balkan Township.

But for me, the most exciting part is getting a glimpse at the architect's renderings of all that's being planned:



As stated in the EAW, "The proposed facility would include approximately 125,000 square feet of new building space including a garage, repair bays and truck wash for maintenance vehicles along with staff

office space, salt storage and other materials storage areas."

Thanks to our Public Works team for their work on the facility planning, and special thanks to our Planning & Zoning staff for their work on the EAW! You can find more information in this news release: [EAW available for proposed Central Range Transportation facility project](#)

Or find the EAW here: [Environmental Assessment Worksheet](#)

Super Saturday

Our Child Care Licensors team hosted a day-long training and resource fair for Licensed Family Child Care Providers last month. The event drew 33 providers (who together had provided a whopping 645 years of service!) from communities throughout the county.



The licensors team includes: Kevin Feldt, Carrie Woods, Becky Lonetto, Barbara Hultman, Tiffany Brown and Susan Sauls.

Also thanks to Diane Seiloff-Yourczek and Carol Hassl from Public Health who were among a half dozen agencies providing information for these providers who do so much to help children and families in our county.

The feedback from participants was very positive, and our staff is already making plans to do this again next year!

A tribute to Paula Stocke

Those of us who were lucky enough to work with Paula Stocke know how dedicated and caring she was. She made a huge impact on our county and PHHS team. It's now apparent that her positive influence was felt across the state!

The Minnesota Community and Family Resource Network (CFRN) is honoring Paula by naming an award in her honor. (For those not aware, Paula is our former Deputy Director of PHHS, who passed away last spring following a lengthy cancer battle.)



The CFRN has created the Paula Stocke Award of Excellence to honor a Family Resource Center, team or individual that exemplifies humility, compassion, and outstanding service to families and the community.

This past week, Paula's wife and daughter (shown above left) were on hand to present the first annual award to Brenda Mahoney who coordinates the Family Resource Center work with the Association of MN Counties.

What a sweet - and well deserved - way to honor Paula's tremendous legacy of service!

Remembering two friends who've impacted SLC

This past week brought the sad news of the passing of two people who have contributed so much to St. Louis County.

The top photo below is of Bob King, who the County Board honored just last year with its outstanding citizen recognition. Bob was a basketball coach who touched and encouraged so many lives.

[Bill King: "Overall, just a prince of a guy": Legendary Orr Braves boys' basketball coach passes away | Sports | mesabtribune.com](#)



I also want to pay tribute to Roy Smith (bottom photo above). Roy worked for both the IRRR and MN North Colleges, so our work overlapped on multiple levels. He was a friend to many of us and was always positive as he focused on finding solutions.

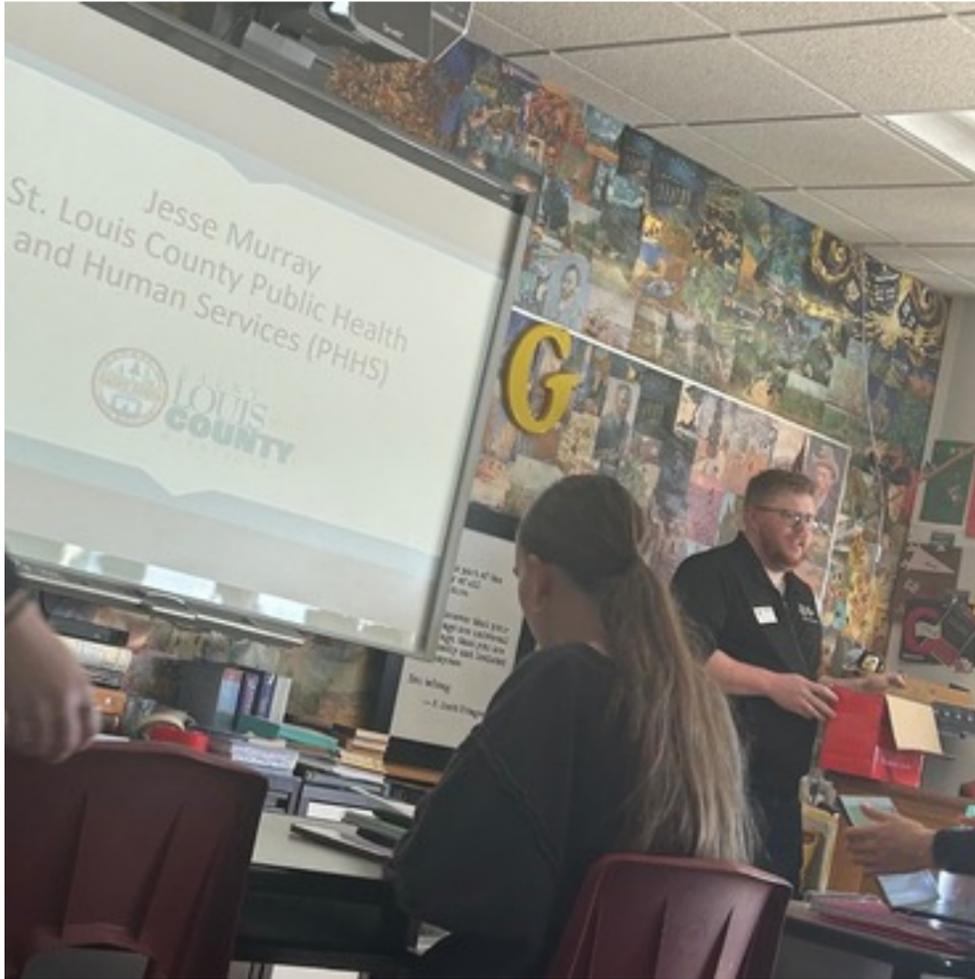
[IRRRB and MNC Announce the Passing of Roy Smith - Minnesota North College](#)

Both of these individuals left a lasting impact and will be missed!

Speaking to students

On a much lighter note, thanks to PHHS's Jesse Murray (who may have been wearing a little of his former HR hat) as he spoke to Duluth East High

School's College and Career Readiness class.



One of the students (who will remain nameless because they aren't supposed to have phones on in class) shared this photo with their parent who passed it on to us :-)

Thanks, Jesse, for being such a positive voice for SLC!

Thanks from the Air Show

Ryan Kern, who leads the Duluth Airshow, stopped by this week to present a signed print from the Navy Blue Angels.



St. Louis County is a longtime supporter of the Airshow, recognizing the tremendous economic impact this event has for our region. It's also a great outreach opportunity for our Veterans Service Officers!

Selfie in Gilbert

Last but not least, I couldn't resist pulling over and stopping by this display on my way home from a late meeting (the sun is sure setting faster!).



This fun Halloween/Christmas/Holiday lighting display is in Gilbert and brought a smile to my face after a long day.

I hope you all are able to find those random moments that make you smile. There's so much going on, but also still so many reasons to be grateful.

Each of you is a valued member of our team, bringing unique skills and perspectives to the work we all do to serve our residents. Thank you for that! And have a great weekend!

Kevin Gray
County Administrator

P.S. This is a note from "Ghostwriter Dana" (added after he reviewed and approved the rest of the content:-) Since today is National Boss's Day, please join me in giving special thanks to Kevin for being an outstanding leader. Thanks, Kevin, for being a grayt boss!

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