

RICE COUNTY CRIME SPOTTERS: Have a Crime Tip to Report?

To text an anonymous tip:
text the word RICECO plus
your tip to 847411

Rice County Sheriff's Office
507-334-4391, 507-645-9576
or 507-744-5185

Dundas Police Department
507-645-5252

Faribault Police Department
507-334-0999

Lonsdale Police Department
507-744-2300

Morristown Police Department
507-685-4190

Northfield Police Department
507-645-4477

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AIS Prevention Plan

5 Winter Safe Driving
County Profile

6 Rice County
Standing Meetings
How to Contact Your
Rice County Officials

www.co.rice.mn.us

Dundas • Faribault
Lonsdale • Morristown
Nerstrand • Northfield
Warsaw • Webster

Enhanced Task Force Takes Aim at Drugs and Violence in Rice County

"It all starts with drugs." That's what Sheriff Troy Dunn says when people ask him what the biggest crime problem in Rice County is.

"Drugs affect how the people using them behave – how they take care of themselves and their families, how they perform at work," said Dunn. "They lose their jobs, they end up in arguments with their loved ones, they're not there for their kids, who start having problems of their own. To support their drug habits, they start stealing and breaking into people's homes. We're getting called. Social Services is getting called. We see increases in domestic disputes, in thefts and burglaries."

Being proactive about the county's drug problems, Dunn said, is going to lead to a decrease in other crimes and other expenses. Rice County recently has invested in two programs designed to make that happen: the Cannon River Drug and Violent Offenders Task Force and the Rice County Drug Court.

"Users and sellers that we apprehend are going to do one of two things: They're going to spend time in the county jail or a state prison. Or they're going to say 'I need to change my life' – which is what we hope they'll do," Dunn said. "We don't want to see the same people

coming back over and over again. We want this to be a safe place to live, a community that is healthy and successful."

Cannon River Drug and Violent Offenders Task Force

The law enforcement group cracking down on drugs, guns, gangs and violence in Rice County has a new name – and a lot more. The Cannon River Drug and Violent Offenders Task Force, formerly known as the Rice County Drug Task Force, has a new structure with more resources, a broader mission, more in-field supervision and more partnerships. The force will have at least four full-time agents, including a liaison from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), as well as the assistance of a narcotics-only detection dog acquired by the Sheriff's Office in 2013. The previous task force, formed in 2008, had only one full-time officer in 2012 and 2013.

"There's only so much one person can do," noted Dunn. "If someone reports suspicious activity in their neighborhood, a patrol car parked nearby may deter some buyers

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Snow and Ice Removal Policy Modified to Allow for Earlier Response by County Plows

A modification in September to the Rice County Snow and Ice Removal Policy has eliminated a restriction that basically prevented the county's snow plows and graders from beginning to plow before 5 a.m. "If it starts snowing heavily at midnight and my staff deems it appropriate and effective, we now can hit the roads at anytime," said Rice County Engineer Dennis Luebbe.

The revised policy offers the opportunity for the county to get a jump start on tending to the 350 miles of paved roads and 80 miles of gravel roads it is responsible for maintaining. It will also undoubtedly lead to some second guessing about when and where the county's

11 plow trucks and four motor graders are deployed. "It's hard to predict exactly how a storm will affect road conditions," Luebbe cautioned. "No two are the same, and different parts of the county will be impacted in different ways."

The policy notes that motorists are required by law to drive according to prevailing conditions. While the county seeks to have its roads passable within a reasonable amount of time following a snow- or ice-related weather event, it says, it may not be possible to drive the legal posted speed limit at all times.

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Do Your Part

Take It To The Box

The Rice County community is serious about preventing medication misuse or abuse and environmentally unsafe medication disposal practices. Take It To The Box promotes the safe use, storage and disposal of medication.

Do you have unneeded prescriptions or over-the-counter medications? Prevent household accidents, keep prescription drugs out of the hands of those who might misuse them, and protect our environment by keeping medications out of landfills and our water supply. Take expired or unneeded drugs to the box.

Medication disposal boxes at both the Faribault and Northfield Police Departments accept over-the-counter medications, prescription drugs and animal medications from community members. (No sharps please!)

To safely dispose of your medications, please cross out your name and other personal identifying information on the container holding them. Please leave the name of the drug visible. You can drop off the medication anonymously in the drop box located in the Police Department lobby and do not have to provide your name or any other personal information.

Disposal Box Locations

Faribault Police Department
25 4th St. NW, Faribault
Open 24 hours every day

Northfield Police Department
1615 Riverview Dr., Northfield
(note the new location)
Open 24 hours every day



Safe Use • Safe Storage • Safe Disposal

Rice County MEDICATION Safety Program
www.ricecountyhc.com • 507-664-3524

Drug Court Works With Non-Violent Offenders

continued from page 1

from approaching for a while. The same for a patrol car observing selling on a street. In the drug task force, however, we can dig deeper, do surveillance, use social media to track suspects, get warrants, make arrests, and get dangerous people off the streets.”

Another goal of the task force is to impact the traffic coming through Rice County. “Interstate 35 is a pipeline for drugs,” Dunn said, particularly meth from Mexico. “They go through here daily.”

That’s a change from when methamphetamine was largely manufactured locally. Federal and state laws passed in 2005 restricted the sale of medications containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, both of which can be used to make meth. Those regulations were extremely effective, Dunn said, in making neighborhoods and the work of law enforcement officers much safer. The Sheriff’s Office found only one mobile meth lab in the county last year; ten years ago that number was more like 12 or 15.

The task force is about more than undercover work and busting down doors, however. “We can’t do this alone,” noted Dunn. That is why another major component of the force’s work is outreach – appearances at churches, service organizations, National Night Out, even book clubs.

“I’m happy to talk to any group that wants to know about this subject,” said Dunn. “Many people have never seen what heroin or meth looks like, don’t know what to look for in their homes or in their neighborhoods. When they do – when they know that we’re interested in learning about things like cars stopping at a neighbor’s house for two or three minutes at all hours of the day and night – the tips they give us can help us get a warrant and lead to convictions.”

Drug Court Works With Non-Violent Offenders

Drug courts are specialized, problem-solving court programs that target non-violent criminal offenders who suffer from addiction to alcohol or drugs and/or mental illness. A 2012 state-wide evaluation by the Minnesota Judicial Branch compared over 500 drug court participants to nearly 650 offenders with similar profiles who did not enter a drug court program and found that drug court participants:

- Had lower recidivism rates over two and a half years – 17% versus 32% reconviction rate;

- Spent fewer days incarcerated, saving the state, on average, \$3,200 per participant over two and a half years; and
- Showed gains in employment, educational achievement, home rental or ownership, and payment of child support over the run of the program.

The Rice County Drug Court (RCDC) provides and enforces a treatment program that prioritizes sobriety and recovery for the offender. Participants receive ongoing treatment, frequent drug testing, and regular mandatory check-in court appearances. The program uses a range of immediate sanctions and incentives to foster behavior change.

“The Rice County Drug Court model will support offenders in their recovery and aid in successful outcomes for participants, their families and the community,” said Rice County Drug Court Coordinator Yvette Marthalar when the program launched in July. “Our program has a very strong foundation because of the ongoing collaboration between county agencies, court services and community organizations.”

RCDC admits adults who are deemed to be high-risk and high-need offenders, who are facing either a presumptive prison sentence or a mandatory minimum of six months in the Rice County Jail. Participants must plead guilty prior to acceptance to RCDC. “That means there’s immediate accountability,” noted Dunn.

Priority is given to participants who are parents of minor children.

“Our first focus,” noted Dunn, “are people with kids, so that their kids don’t follow in their footsteps. If we can fix Mom and Dad, they can get their priorities back on track and become positive role models for their children.”

Participants must complete three phases of structured services and accountability with a minimum of 180 days of sobriety. All phases require 32 hours of structured activity scheduled per week. All phases require a minimum of two chemical tests per week. RCDC coordinates the efforts of the judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, law enforcement, probation, social services and treatment providers to help them accomplish this. Team meetings and court hearings are held every Thursday.

For more information on the Rice County Drug Court, download the brochure and participant handbook at www.co.rice.mn.us/departments/drug-court or download the slide show at www.co.rice.mn.us/special-projects/information-rice-county-drug-court.

Rice County Landfill, Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste Facilities

3800 145th Street E. • Dundas, MN 55019

507-332-6833 • www.co.rice.mn.us/waste • rcsolidwaste@co.rice.mn.us

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday–Friday: 7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
Saturday:
April–October: 7:30–11:30 a.m. (2nd and 4th Saturdays only)
November–March: 7:30–11:30 a.m. (2nd Saturday only)

2015 RICE COUNTY FEE SCHEDULE

A number of fee increases become effective on January 1, 2015. Please visit www.co.rice.mn.us for details.

2015 Recycling Calendar/Schedule

Your single-sort recycling will be picked up on a schedule set by your garbage hauler (bi-weekly or weekly). Call your garbage hauler if you are not sure of your week (blue or white, indicated below).

= Rice County Landfill, Recycling, Household Hazardous Waste Facilities are Closed

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In The News

Residents Take Advantage of Free Recycling Events

Rice County held another successful round of appliance and electronics recycling collection events this past fall for county residents. The events were held on consecutive weekends in September in Faribault, Lonsdale and Dundas to provide opportunities for the public to properly recycle their unwanted electronics and appliances. The events were free to all residents of the county. Highlights included:

- 1,382 vehicles attended the events.
- 192,080 lbs. of electronics were collected for recycling.
- 1,011 appliances were collected for recycling.

Other Ways to Recycle

If you have questions about properly recycling your unwanted appliances and electronics, contact the Rice County Recycling Center at RCSolidWaste@co.rice.mn.us or 507-332-6833.

The Rice County Landfill and Recycling Center accept appliances and electronics for a small fee. In addition, various manufacturers, retailers and local non-profits offer **free e-waste recycling options**, including the following:

- Best Buy: www.bestbuy.com (Follow the Services link.)
- Apple: www.apple.com/recycling
- Canon: www.usa.canon.com (Follow the Environment link.)
- Dell: www.dell.com (Follow the Corporate Responsibility link.)
- Ruth's House in Faribault accepts used cell phones and small ink cartridges (no toner cartridges) free of charge. Contact them at 507-332-2236.

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan Adopted

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) – they're not just in northern Minnesota. Both flowering rush and Eurasian watermilfoil can be found in the lakes of Rice County. Their presence has a great impact on aquatic ecosystems, recreation and the economy. In order to prevent the spread of AIS, it is important to understand what they are and what preventive measures can be taken individually.

AIS are non-native plants and animals that do not naturally occur within a given environment. Once introduced into an ecosystem where they have few natural predators, they can cause great damage to the water resources.

So, the question asked by many remains, "How do they spread and what can I do"? The main way aquatic invasive species spread is by hitching rides on watercraft and equipment used by anglers, boaters and others. Because they are extremely small, they are often overlooked. Always remember – AIS cannot move across land without help.

In order to help protect Minnesota's lakes, rivers and wetlands, remember to:

- Learn to recognize AIS and report all infestations.
- Clean and drain boats/equipment before leaving a water access – remove all visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting equipment, as well clean and dry anything that contacted water, such as boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, pets, etc.
- Eliminate water from all equipment before transporting.
- Throw unwanted bait, worms and fish parts in the trash, and never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan

Rice County recently adopted a plan to outline the efforts the county will undertake to help prevent the spread of harmful AIS within the county and the state of Minnesota. This initial plan has the main objectives broken into two areas: 1) Assessing the county's

resources and risk of AIS introduction, and 2) Increasing public awareness and participation in prevention, early detection and rapid response identification.

The current main focus areas are to assess the current status of public accesses, educational efforts, and provide training to various entities/individuals in Rice County. The plan also involves developing an ambassador program to provide training to potential partners in an effort to increase the resources and educational efforts throughout the county in a wide array of avenues. The plan will be reviewed annually and adjusted based on needs and available funding.

Volunteer Training

Citizens who are interested in informing the public about AIS and how to slow their spread can receive AIS volunteer training from the Minnesota DNR Watercraft Inspection Program staff.

Rice County will offer training on Thursday, April 9, 2015, 6:00–9:00 p.m., at the Government Services Building, room 3A–3B, Faribault. To register, visit www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/ais_volunteer.html. (The 2015 training dates will be posted online soon.)

Lake Service Provider Training

Businesses that are defined by Minnesota law as lake service providers need to have the owner or manager attend AIS training and apply for a lake service provider permit every three years.

Rice County will hold lake service provider training on Tuesday, March 10, 2015, 1:00–4:00 p.m., at Buckham Memorial Library, Faribault. To register, visit www.dnr.state.mn.us/lsp/index.html

For more information about aquatic invasive species, visit the Minnesota DNR website at www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/aquatic/index.html, or contact the Rice County Environmental Planner at 507-332-6113 or www.co.rice.mn.us/water-resource-management.

Conservation Tree Seedlings and Shrubs for Sale

The Rice Soil and Water Conservation District, 1810 NW 30th Street in Faribault, is currently taking orders for its annual tree sale. The district sells a wide variety of tree seedlings and shrubs (in quantities of 25, 50, etc.) to be used for conservation purposes only,

such as windbreaks and wildlife plantings.

Orders will only be taken until February 28 this year, with trees arriving in April. To receive an order form or get free help with a tree plan, call the district office at 507-332-5408 or visit www.riceswcd.org.

County Snow and Ice Removal Policy Modified

continued from page 1

“We’re not a 24-hour snow removal service,” Luebbe added, “and we cannot assure a completely bare road.” He urged people to be patient, particularly in the vicinity of snow removal equipment. As annoying as it is to get stuck behind a plow when it’s clearing a road, there’s something that is even worse: Colliding with one of them. In addition to its own considerable weight, each of the orange tandem trucks carries up to 15 tons of sand-salt mixture, usually enough to treat the average route of roughly 28 miles. Luebbe suggested that motorists follow the advice of the Minnesota Department of Transportation and stay at least 50 feet behind the plow. Snowplow operators will pull over when it is safe to do so in order to allow traffic build-up to pass.

Help Us Help You

The county will dispatch plows, provided it is safe to do so and resources are available, when one or more of the following conditions occur:

- There is snow accumulation of two inches or more (less if the snow is wet and heavy).
- Drifting snow interferes with travel.
- Icy conditions seriously affect travel.

The decision to plow or sand a county road or part of it will be made by the Rice County engineer, maintenance director or their designee. Operations will be halted when it is deemed too hazardous to continue. Factors that can delay snow and ice removal include severe cold, strong winds and limited visibility.

You can help by doing the following:

- Please remove vehicles from the public streets and highways when it snows.
- Do not plow or place snow from private drives onto any public road. Doing so is prohibited by Minnesota law.
- Snow and ice removal is a difficult and time-consuming job. Your tolerance and understanding is greatly appreciated as county staff work to restore the highways to safe winter driving conditions.

County Profile



Cheryl Bjoraker

**Financial Worker
Social Services**

Cheryl Bjoraker is celebrating her 36th year as a Rice County employee. In 1978, she joined Social Services as an office support worker in the clerical unit, then transferred to a case aide position in the social services unit in 1981. In 1996, she joined the income maintenance unit as a financial worker, and is currently working with the intake/interviewing team. With each position, Bjoraker’s duties evolved due to changes in county, state and federal programs, demographics and technology. “My job has always been interesting and challenging. I feel fortunate to have worked in many different capacities with so many different populations,” she says.

Bjoraker was born in Owatonna and raised in Medford. After high school, she attended the legal secretarial program at the Faribault Area Vocational Technical Institute.

She and her husband, Mark, have two children. Son Brandon and his wife, Emily, live in Iowa with their children Carter (16), Caitlyn (10), Chloe (6) and Cora (3). Daughter Krista lives in Fridley, Minn. Her cats Max and Molly keep Bjoraker company at home, where she enjoys reading, gardening, playing cards and fishing (especially in northern Minnesota). Bjoraker says she especially treasures the time she gets to spend with family and friends.

MnDOT Winter Safe Driving Reminders

Check road conditions at www.511mn.org or call 511 before traveling. Note that the MnDOT road conditions map is using new terminology this year:

NORMAL

- Dry or wet pavement. May include icy bridge decks.

PARTIALLY COVERED

- Ice, sleet/slush, snow or mixture of these causing the roadway to be partially covered (up to 50%)
- Roadway may become slick, snow packed or rutted.
- Moderate blowing and drifting snow.
- Drivers may experience difficulty seeing road markings.
- Normal traffic speeds MAY be impacted due to visibility and precipitation.

COMPLETELY COVERED

- Pavement completely covered (i.e., rain, frost, ice sleet/slush, snow or a mixture thereof).
- Sleet/slush means pavement is 100% wet and may have slick spots or standing water.
- Snow accumulation completely obscures the pavement markings.
- Heavy snowfall, strong winds, ground drifting and freezing rain make travel difficult and hazardous.

- Normal traffic speeds WILL be impacted due to reduced visibility.

TRAVEL NOT ADVISED

- Being on the road is dangerous.
- Ice-covered roadways – near blizzard conditions.
- Visibility below 1/4 mile.

CLOSED

- Travel not allowed.
- Emergency vehicles only.

Be patient and remember snowplows are working to improve road conditions.

- Stay back at least five car lengths behind the plow. Snowplow operators will pull over when it is safe to do so to allow traffic build-up to pass.
- Stay alert for snowplows, which turn or exit frequently and often with little warning. They may also travel over center lines or partially in traffic to further improve road conditions.
- Slow down to a safe speed for current conditions, and give yourself plenty of travel time. Snowplows typically move at slower speeds.
- Buckle up and ensure children are properly secured in the correct child restraint.
- Avoid unnecessary travel if road conditions are too poor.

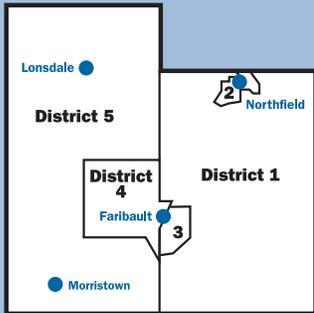


Rice County Report

Rice County Government Services Building
320 NW Third Street
Faribault, MN 55021

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Contacts



Rice County Board of Commissioners (as of January 1, 2015)

District 1
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507-334-5746
jgillen@co.rice.mn.us

District 2
Galen Malecha
507-645-6041
gmalecha@co.rice.mn.us

District 3
David Miller
507-334-4763
dmiller@co.rice.mn.us

District 4
Steve Bauer
507-334-9700
sbauer@co.rice.mn.us

District 5
Jeff Docken
952-652-2876
jdocken@co.rice.mn.us

www.co.rice.mn.us

Phone Numbers

General Information 507-332-6100
Toll-Free Numbers (do not dial "1" or area code)
From Northfield 645-9576
From Lonsdale 744-5185

Rice County Standing Meetings

Board of Commissioners
Meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month as a Committee of the Whole/Work Session, 8:30 a.m., Commissioners' Room, Rice County Government Services Building.

Meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month as a Regular Board, 8:30 a.m., Commissioners' Room, Rice County Government Services Building.

Board of Adjustment
Meets the first Thursday of the month; 7:00 p.m., Commissioners' Room, Rice County Government Services Building.

Planning Commission
Meets the first Thursday of the month, immediately following the Board of Adjustment meeting, Commissioners' Room, Rice County Government Services Building.

Community Corrections Advisory Board
Meets the third Thursday of March, June, September and December, 3:30 p.m., Rice County Government Services Building.

Community Health Services Citizens' Advisory Committee
Meets the fourth Wednesday every other month (January, March, May, July, September, November), 6:30-8:00 p.m.; call 507-332-6111 for location.

Emergency Medical Services Provider Council
Meets quarterly, 7:00-9:00 p.m.; call 507-332-6119 for meeting date and location.

Mental Health Advisory Council
Meets the fourth Wednesday of the month, 12:00 p.m. (noon), Friendship House, located at 212-B Central Avenue, Faribault.

Rice County Departments

Administrator Tony Murphy
507-332-6101 amurphy@co.rice.mn.us
Assessor Paul Knutson
507-332-6102 pknutson@co.rice.mn.us
Attorney John Fossum
507-332-6103 jfossum@co.rice.mn.us
Auditor/Treasurer Fran Windschitl
507-332-6104 fwindschitl@co.rice.mn.us
Community Corrections Director Christine Curtis
507-332-6106 ccurtis@co.rice.mn.us
Court Administrator Hans Holland
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Economic Development Director Deanna Kuennen
507-332-6126 dkuennen@co.rice.mn.us
Environmental Services Director Julie Runkel
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Extension Regional Director LuAnn Hiniker
507-332-6109 luannah@umn.edu
Highway Engineer Dennis Luebbe
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Information Technology Director Kevin Schmidt
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Recorder Judy VanErp
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Sheriff Troy Dunn
507-332-6010 tdunn@co.rice.mn.us
Social Services Director Mark Shaw
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Veterans' Service Officer Tracy McBroom
507-332-6176 trmcroom@co.rice.mn.us