



Lac qui Parle County *Board of Commissioners*

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Todd Patzer, Board Chair

Press Release

Formation of Lac qui Parle County Land Records Office

MADISON, MN – Lac qui Parle County has announced that the former offices of County Assessor and County Recorder will be combined to form the County Land Records Office. The offices were combined through action by the Lac qui Parle County Board of Commissioners at their meeting on October 20, 2020.

In related board action, Lori Schwendemann was named the county's first Land Records Director, which will be the department head for the new office. Schwendemann has been with the county since 1990, and was first appointed County Assessor in 1995. "Lori's proven history as a capable and effective manager for us was crucial to making this happen. It's hard work to be the first person to lead a new department, but we know that she is up to the challenge" commented Board Chair Todd Patzer after the meeting.

Schwendemann was appointed Interim Recorder in August, following the resignation of the former Recorder. The board appointed a committee consisting of Patzer, Commissioner DeRon Brehmer, Attorney Rick Stulz, Coordinator Jake Sieg, and Schwendemann, and directed the group to help facilitate the transition and determine next steps. During the intervening months, the group saw many advantages of running the two departments together. In particular, the skills and expertise needed from staff in both offices overlapped in several areas, which created benefits for cross-training. Processes that currently span both offices can be combined to create efficiency. For these reasons and more, the committee recommended the permanent combination of Recorder and Assessor into the new Land Records Office.

The decision represents an historic change for Lac qui Parle County; the separate offices of Recorder and Assessor go back to at least the 1940's. It was noted during the meeting, however, that combinations such as this have become more commonplace as counties adjust to the changes in the workforce, meeting the customers needs, and serving the public most efficiently.

From the perspective of visitors to the office, the experience will change little in the near future, but adjustments may happen as opportunities are identified. In addition to Schwendemann, The Land Records Office will continue to be staffed by deputies Lisa Strand, Julie Geerdes, and Wendy Bear, with an additional full-time appraiser position to be added sometime in 2021.

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[For Immediate Release]