

# Redwood County Connection

Vol. 3, No. 1

The Official Newsletter of Redwood County

Fall/Winter Edition 2020



## A New Justice Center

The County Board has been working on a solution for the past several years to address the century-old courthouse and its many problems that come with an aging building, which include heating, cooling, technology, and security issues.

After many discussions at their public board meetings and review of potential designs, the Board has approved a modified courthouse design that will be a two-story building with a tunnel connection to the existing jail.



The Board engaged in design planning processes to determine a final site solution, gain consensus on the final size, and set the maximum budget while keeping the following design items in mind:

- Confirm the needed space for each department affected by this project.
- Develop the site solution for the

Courthouse site to incorporate the County Board objectives for parking and greenspace on property availability.

- Met with the Sheriff's department on security and safety for the new building.
- Met with City staff on any site or zoning implications of the design.

Extensive planning began in May 2018 with the Board engaging Wold Architects and Engineers for the project design. The Board brought in Contegrity Group, Inc. as construction managers in September 2019. Bids were let for the project in September 2020 with an

approximate total project budget of \$10,463,000. Construction for the project is slated to begin spring 2021 and

completion is anticipated to be mid-summer 2022.

The new facility and underground tunnel construction will be directly adjacent to the north of the current courthouse and all on county owned property. County operations will continue to operate in the current courthouse. Demolition of the current courthouse will occur after all departments have been relocated to the newly constructed facility, sometime in summer 2022.



The Board will issue bonds of approximately \$10 million, with a debt service of 20 years to fund the project. The bond market is very favorable for the county and

it is anticipated the true interest cost will be less than 2% over the life of the bonds.

The following table shows an approximate tax impact on the total debt service levy as provided by the County's bond counsel, Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors, LLC.

Total Debt Service Levy

Levy Year	Homestead Agriculture * (\$ per acre)				Non-Homestead Agriculture (\$ per acre)		
	\$200,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,000
2020	\$27	\$0.38	\$0.45	\$0.53	\$0.75	\$0.90	\$1.05
2021	\$34	\$0.46	\$0.56	\$0.65	\$0.93	\$1.11	\$1.30
Increase	\$6	\$0.08	\$0.11	\$0.12	\$0.18	\$0.21	\$0.25
*Does not include house, garage and one acre, which is taxed the same as homestead residential							

# State Veteran Cemetery in Redwood County!

By *Dustin Hunter, Redwood County Veteran Service Officer*

Redwood County received notice from the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs the grant application to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs was accepted to construct a State Veterans Cemetery in Redwood County. The Redwood County Veteran Service Office is excited to engage in this important project! The State Cemetery is located on the South of Highway 71 at the corner of Nobles Ave and Highway 71 in Redwood County.



Since the proposed project was announced over a decade ago (2009), Veterans and their families have been anxiously awaiting its' impending start and completion. This project seemed to have stagnated, creating doubt and angst among the Veterans, their families and various communities in the area.

On October 12, 2020, Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), Mr. Larry Herke signed the memorandum extending committed to the VA National Cemetery Administration of the state's pledge to move forward with the State Veteran Cemetery project in Redwood County.

According to the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program Memorandum, dated September 29, 2020, there are 22,198 unserved Veterans that would benefit from the use of this Cemetery. This estimated population comes from a 75 mile radius of Redwood Falls. Any additional Counties that the radius includes would cover their Veteran population as well and is also part of the 22,198 as stated above.

Here is quick look at the major mile stones, "Road to a New Cemetery". Please note that all dates are subject to change.

Design Phase	October 2020 – October 2021
Construction Phase	November 2021- Nov. 2023
Open Facility for Operations	
And first Burial	November 2023
Dedication Ceremony	May 2024

When a Veteran is buried in a VA Cemetery it is 100% free, as is the perpetual care of the site. A spouse or eligible dependent can be placed with the Veteran for \$745, which is subject to change.

Can I pre-register & what forms are required?

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs does have a "Pre-Registration" form for a Veteran wishing to be placed in the Duluth, Little Falls or Preston Cemeteries. As the Redwood Falls Cemetery gets closer to the final stages, the State will be updating the Pre-Registration form to include it. For a Veteran wishing to be placed in any Veterans Cemetery, his or her DD-214 is also required for eligibility purposes.

For additional information on all Minnesota State Veteran Cemeteries, please call our office at (507) 637-4034 or go online to the MDVA website at: <https://mn.gov/mdva/memorials/>



*Pictured from left to right: Landowner Robert LeSage, Commissioner Lon Walling, County Administrator Vicki Knobloch-Kletscher, Sr. Administrator of Memorial Affairs David Swantek, Director of Veterans Programs & Memorial Affairs Andy Gervais, Redwood CVSO Dustin Hunter, Lower Sioux TVSO Galyn Minkel, Commissioner Larry Herke, Commissioner Jim Salfer & Commissioner Denny Groebner.*

# REDWOOD COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

by Alan Forsberg, P.E., Interim Engineer

The County Highway Department has had a busy year – maintaining roads and bridges, constructing new projects and adopting new software to help with managing our work.

The Maintenance Group, under the direction of our new Maintenance Superintendent, Jamie Larsen has worked hard to repair over 20 road and bridge sites damaged by previous years’ floods, some with our own forces and some by local contractors. The photo below shows a repair site on CSAH 17 where high flows washed out a drop structure and created an erosion gully leading down to the Redwood River. With the assistance of Schmidt Construction and our crew hauling about 150 truckloads of fill, this safety hazard and erosion site repair was recently completed. A salt shed with separate compartments for salt and mixed sand / salt is under construction at the Redwood Falls shop, just in time for the winter season.



CSAH 17 Drop Structure

Several new pieces of equipment this year will enable more efficient operations, including a snow blower and bituminous mill for an existing skid

steer loader; a tractor with loader and large tow behind mower; a tail gate paver for patching bituminous roads and the major item – two new tandem snow plow trucks to replace two old and worn out ones.



New Tailgate Paver

Construction activity has included completing cooperative projects with the city of Redwood Falls, DeKalb Street; Morgan, several County Roads; and Vesta; and several small bridges where weight posted bridges were replaced by precast reinforced concrete culverts. The major projects were reconstructing 7.5 miles of CSAH 6 pavement from TH 19 north to the Minnesota River and a new CSAH 101 bridge over the Minnesota River north of Redwood Falls. The pavement project may be a new model for reconstructing our many miles of old and deteriorated pavements – cold in place recycle of the old asphalt, edge drain tile where needed, and new bituminous overlay.



CSAH 101 Bridge Construction

Turned out great. The bridge over the Minnesota River has been very



CSAH 10 New Bridge Construction

challenging with extremely hard granite rock foundation piers and abutments. The foundation is just about to rise out of the water; the beams and deck are expected to be much smoother going.

Administration staff have worked closely with the engineering techs and IT to implement new contract management software. The software will provide a smooth path from project cost estimates, contract bidding and award, through contractor payments and project completion. It interfaces nicely with the Department’s cost accounting system.

As many of you know, Anthony Sellner P.E, the County’s appointed engineer, was deployed as a Navy Reservist to the Middle East last October with anticipation to return within three months. We expect him to return within 3 months or so. I have been acting as interim engineer during his absence, and want to thank all the excellent Highway and the other Department staff for their tremendous support and comradeship over the last year. The support of the County Board and Administration is also very much appreciated.

## FEMA Funding for Damaged Ditches

If you drive around Redwood County, you likely have noticed areas where there is damage to the Public Drainage Ditches. There are blue and orange colored flags along all the drainage ditches, representing two different FEMA disaster events; the summer of 2018 and spring of 2019. Due to the extensive waterflows, our drainage ditches sustained millions of dollars in damages during the disaster events. The county drainage inspectors have been working tirelessly to locate, flag, measure, photograph, and catalog the thousands of individual sites in order to seek FEMA funding to assist in the repairs. Attaining financial aid through FEMA not only consists of cataloging, but fulfilling the required paperwork. We are actively working on both disaster events to secure funding.

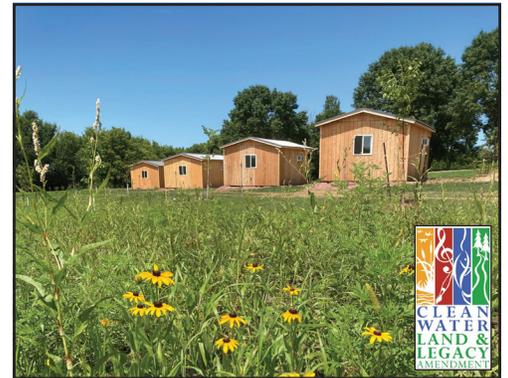
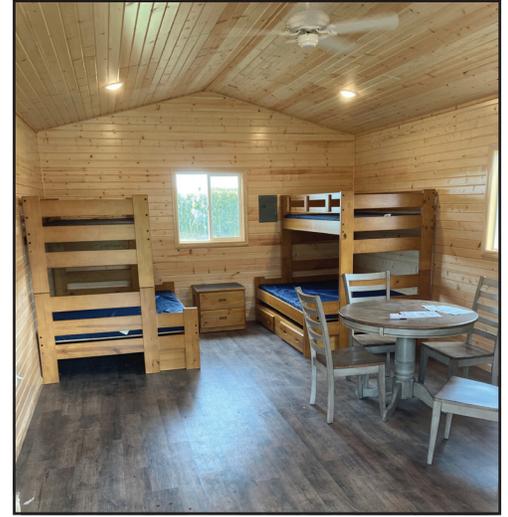
Even though staff continue to complete the FEMA requirements, it has not stopped us from beginning to complete many necessary repairs. All across the County disaster repairs are being made, along with the normal yearly maintenance requirements. Some work remains on hold until we have fully secured FEMA funding, as the repairs are too expensive to complete without federal disaster assistance. If we are fortunate to replicate this year's weather for the next couple years, you will notice a whole lot less blue and orange flags around the County. If you have any questions, please contact the Environmental Office at (507) 637-4023.



## Camper Cabins added at Plum Creek Park

Have you ever wanted to go camping but don't own a tent or RV? Or does setting up camp keep you from spending a weekend away from home? If all you want to do is focus on enjoying the park, and not hassle with the camping extras - we have the solution for you! Redwood County's Plum Creek Park is proud to introduce the addition of 6 new camper cabins, renting at only \$70 per night. Each cabin is 14'x26' and features twin over full bunk beds, mattresses, kitchen table and chairs, and counter space. They also have air conditioning for those hot summer days and heat for the early and late camping season. Outside each cabin is a picnic table and fire pit for your enjoyment. All you need to do is bring bedding, food, and drinks!

The camper cabins were added through a Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission grant awarded to Redwood County. Other recent grant funded improvements include 50-amp service for all overnight RV campsites, two new bathrooms, a self-rental kayak station, additional primitive camping sites, and a new trail connecting the upper and the lower park. Visit our website to learn more or to make a reservation at [www.plumcreekpark.com](http://www.plumcreekpark.com).



*Pictures illustrate damages to the County Ditch system caused by the 2018 and 2019 flood events*



## What is Sentence to Service?

by Jay Baune

The Sentence to Service (STS) program is collaboration between the Redwood County District Court, the Redwood County Sheriff's office, and the Minnesota Dept. of Corrections. This highly successful program provides the opportunity/privilege for individuals who have gone through the court system, and have received court ordered hours, fines, and/or probation supervision fees,

the ability to provide physical labor in lieu of monetary obligations.

The major benefit of this program allows these low-risk, non-violent individuals to complete supervised services to the community, county, and state. These services include the maintaining of public spaces such as Plum Creek Park and the Redwood County Historical Society sites to include the Redwood County Museum and the Gilfillan Estate. Additionally the program benefits the local school district by the painting of

classrooms and other areas as needed. Additionally, this service benefits different non-profit organizations such as: Redwood Area food shelf, clothing centers, and the Duke Memorial-Redwood Area Animal Shelter. Along with benefiting local organizations, the STS program provides the added benefit to the state of Minnesota by covering eight ditch-miles for the Department of Transportation's (DoT) Adopt a Highway.

Please contact Jay Baune, Sentence to Serve Crew Leader, at 507-637-4337, or email at Jay\_b@co.redwood.mn.us

## Septic and Well Homeowner Workshop

Redwood County is excited to invite county residents to an upcoming Septic and Well Homeowner Workshop, on December 8th from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM pm at the Wabasso Community Center. The Redwood County Environmental Office is partnering with the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center and the Minnesota Department of Health to provide this free educational opportunity to all Redwood County residents.

Representatives from the University of Minnesota and the Department of Health will lead the class which will focus on septic and well function and maintenance. They have partnered with counties around the state to offer these workshops, which have been attended by over 700 homeowners over the past 2 years.

Septic systems are essentially water recycling systems. They use the soil and the naturally occurring bacteria in the soil to take the "bad stuff" out of the sewage, allowing clean water to percolate back down into the groundwater. Roughly a third of

Minnesota households have septic systems but in Redwood County it is closer to two thirds. How you, as a homeowner, take care of your septic system and well affects how they work and how long they last. The knowledge shared at the workshop can help homeowners save money and protect the environment.

The workshop is free to all interested persons. A free meal will be provided, courtesy of Baune Plumbing &

Heating of Wabasso. Other local well and septic businesses and contractors have provided door prizes, to be handed out at the event. Additionally, the Department of Health will be providing free well testing to anyone who is interested.

Please notify us of your attendance by visiting the Redwood County website and filling out the registration form: <https://redwoodcounty-mn.us/departments/environmental-office/>.

PRESENTED BY THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA AND  
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## SEPTIC & WELL HOMEOWNER WORKSHOP

SPONSORED BY THE REDWOOD COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICE

**TUESDAY,  
DECEMBER 8, 2020  
6 - 8 p.m.**

**WABASSO  
COMMUNITY  
CENTER**

1429 Front Street, Wabasso

REGISTER FOR THIS FREE  
EVENT & LIGHT MEAL

[redwoodcounty-mn.us/departments/  
environmental-office](https://redwoodcounty-mn.us/departments/environmental-office)

Meal sponsored by Baune Plumbing & Heating





## Notes from the Assessor's Office

### Common Questions Asked of the Assessor's Office



with an Income Qualified Assessor.

**John Thompson** joins Redwood County with 12 years experience as an Assessor. He is an Accredited Minnesota Assessor (AMA) along

**"Nothing has changed. Why did my value change?"**

Your property value is a reflection of the market, which is constantly changing. The Assessor's values are required to be within 90%-105% of actual sales market. The Assessor maintains a sales study and does verification phone calls to see if a sale can be used in the current "Market Study".

**"What is the benefit to homesteading my property?"**

When you Homestead your property, a portion of your Market Value is excluded from the Taxable Value of your home. This results in a tax reduction benefit. If you have agricultural land, it's best to call and ask about the benefits of Agricultural Homestead.



U of MN EXTENSION

### 4-H Grows Here!

Our 4-H programs exist in all regions of Redwood County.

Membership is open to all youth interested and we are open and ready to go! 4-H has seen a lot over our 100+ year existence. This year has been no exception. Clubs and county programs have worked to create supportive spaces for our youth to continue to connect, learn, and grow.

Our club leaders took on the challenge of creating spaces for our kids to make decisions, connect with their communities, and continue their traditions albeit in a different fashion this year. Our youth leadership team promoted in-person showcase events this summer and our adult leadership teams supported their decision and formed teams to make our showcase events open and inviting to our youth and their families and gave space to those families who needed it. We saw incredible community support across the county for our 4-H programs. We have so many people and businesses to thank and 4-H is so appreciative of your support!

This fall our clubs, working under very strict safety guidelines, are opening their clubs and working with the youth to make decisions on community service, educational projects, leadership opportunities, and more. Many met in person outdoors during our beautiful fall

weather. Some will meet in small groups over winter, others will meet virtually, and some are learning how to integrate in-person and virtual meetings to ensure all are included in their programming.

Redwood County 4-H Ambassadors, our youth leadership team grades 7+, are movers and shakers. This group is hosting Family Fun Day this year. Creating a new approach to ensure safety of attendees is happening yet creating a fun family event at Ramsey Park. Activities are planned to meet our safety policies and incorporated a lot of fun for those attending along the way.

New partnerships are happening in Redwood County where volunteers are leading 4-H programs on their own creating 4-H explorer clubs providing informal educational opportunities for the youth they serve. It was an exciting summer to see these programs emerge in partnership with 4-H and program staff.

New opportunities were created so youth can participate in our 4-H at Home programs where we connected virtually with youth in many different areas of 4-H. Mission Mars to engineering, gardening to babysitting classes, canning classes to health programs, agronomy and horticulture to farm tours to horse programs.

Today we have a new program called Explore MN 4-H. This is a new concept where



### TOOLS OF THE TRADE

These are some of the tools of the Assessor's Office. We measure ALL buildings with a Laser measuring tool, as well as a camera to document structures and sketch most buildings. This helps us to be as accurate as possible when valuing your property for the County.

small groups of youth/adults gather in person or virtually to learn more about specific topics. Another option for a volunteer led approach to youth and adult teams working together to obtain their goals. 4-H topics are vast. Explore MN 4-H could include any of these topics or their own. The smaller groups will work with 4-H staff to put their program together. Topic examples include environmental science, shop, cooking, quilting, financial education, entrepreneurship, agronomy, home environment, horticulture, birding, zoonotic and veterinary sciences and more.

Persons interested in taking part in our 4-H programs are welcome to contact Stacy Johnson at Redwood County 4-H at 507-637-4025 or email [skjohnso@umn.edu](mailto:skjohnso@umn.edu).

On behalf of the Redwood County Commissioners and Economic Development Authority

★ Congratulations ★

to the 2019-20 LINC Redwood County Graduating Class



[LINCREDWOODCOUNTY.ORG](http://LINCREDWOODCOUNTY.ORG)

**ATTENTION**  
**REDWOOD COUNTY RESIDENTS**

What is your home internet speed?



INTERNET SPEED MB/S

The Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition is conducting a statewide crowd-sourced internet speed testing initiative. The goal of this project is to create an accurate statewide map of where internet service is available and what speeds people are currently receiving.

TAKE THE TEST IN ONE MINUTE OR LESS!  
[www.mnruralbroadbandcoalition.com/speedtest](http://www.mnruralbroadbandcoalition.com/speedtest)

endorsed by the Redwood County Board of Commissioners & Economic Development Authority

## REDWOOD COUNTY COVID SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF GRANT PROGRAM

Redwood County received \$1.9 million in Federal CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Funds through the State of Minnesota. One of the eligible Fund uses is to provide financial assistance to for-profit and non-profit businesses in Redwood County negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. On September 1, 2020, the Redwood County Economic Development Authority (EDA) began accepting applications from Redwood County small businesses, for the Redwood County COVID Small Business Relief Grant Program. A total of 139 eligible businesses were awarded, totaling \$1,236,974. The County CARES Act Oversight Committee, with the support of the County Commissioners issued a second grant cycle with the desire to reach those businesses who did not receive an award through the first cycle. The second grant cycle closed on October 21st, with anticipation of approximately another \$300,000 to be distributed to eligible small businesses.

Redwood County received \$1.9 million in Federal CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Funds through the State of Minnesota. One of the eligible Fund uses is to provide financial assistance to for-profit and non-profit businesses in Redwood

## Broadband State Testing

### WHAT IS BROADBAND?

Broadband is becoming a common term these days, but not commonly known. According to the FCC, the definition of broadband internet is the transmission of wide bandwidth data over a high speed internet connection. A minimum of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload speeds providing high speed internet access via multiple types of technologies including fiber optics, wireless, cable, DSL and satellite.

### WHY IS BROADBAND SO IMPORTANT?

High-speed internet access is necessary for much of our day-to-day lives. Unfortunately the COVID pandemic amplified the need when students transitioned to distance learning, and others began working remotely. Many services which once were offered in person converted to a virtual platform requiring access to high-speed internet, to include tele-health. Simply put, access to broadband in Redwood County does not meet the needs of the

residents and businesses, ranking the lowest in the state.

### WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

One of the easiest ways is to complete the statewide broadband speed test. Early Fall, the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition announced a statewide broadband speed test initiative, which is endorsed by the Redwood County Board of Commissioners and Economic Development Authority (EDA). The goal of the initiative is to find out exactly where broadband services is available in rural MN; and at what speed people are receiving it. The desire is to have every household, business, ag producer, individual in Redwood County take the test at least once. This data will allow the Redwood County EDA begin working with internet providers to increase broadband access throughout the County. It's super easy to do and takes less than one minute.

**TO TAKE THE TEST VISIT:**  
<http://mnruralbroadbandcoalition.com/speedtest>

Another way to help, is to submit a testimonial to the Redwood County EDA. Share your story of what you are experiencing. How has the lack of broadband impacted you and your family? How has it impacted your business? Are you an ag producer and struggling to upload or download data while out in the field? These testimonials would be used when meeting with existing and potentially new internet providers and developing awareness to the needs of the residents. If you feel inspired to share, please email your story by emailing [briana\\_m@co.redwood.mn.us](mailto:briana_m@co.redwood.mn.us) or mail it to Redwood County Government Center at 403 South Mill Street, Redwood Falls MN 56283.

### WHO CAN I CONTACT TO LEARN MORE?

Contact Briana Mumme, Redwood County Economic Development Coordinator at (507) 637-1122 or [briana\\_m@co.redwood.mn.us](mailto:briana_m@co.redwood.mn.us). Or visit the state of Minnesota's Office of Broadband at <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband>.



**Redwood County Connection**  
 Redwood County Government Center  
 403 S Mill St  
 PO Box 130  
 Redwood Falls, MN 56283

PRST STD  
 ECRWSS  
 US POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 PERMIT #20

# Local Postal Customer

## Contacts

Administration	637-4016
Assessor	637-4008
Attorney Office	637-4010
Auditor/Treasurer	637-4013
Court Administration	637-4018
Emergency Mgmt.	637-4035
Environmental	637-4023
Extension	637-4025
Highway Dept.	637-4056
Human Services	637-4050
License Center	637-4029
Public Health	637-4041
Probation Office	637-4047
Recorder	637-4032
Recycling Facility	637-1800
Restorative Justice	637-1139
Sheriff's Office	637-4036
Veteran's Office	637-4034



### Commissioners

Jim Salfer	342-2431
Dennis Groebner	692-2235
Bob VanHee	616-1000
Dave Forkrud	938-4269
Lon Walling	828-4940

## Redwood County Recycling

### Curbside Recycling:

A detailed recycling schedule can be found on the website at:  
[renvillecountymn.com/services/RRMRF/index.php](http://renvillecountymn.com/services/RRMRF/index.php)

### Household Hazardous Waste (HHW):

Household products that can present a hazard to our

health and our environment when not properly used, stored, and disposed of, are considered Household Hazardous Waste. The Redwood County HHW Facility accepts hazardous materials from both Redwood and Renville County residents for **NO CHARGE**.

For more information about acceptable items and drop off schedule go to:  
<https://www.renvillecountymn.com/services/RRMRF/index.php>

## Need to dispose of old Holiday\* Lights?

**The Redwood/Renville Regional Solid Waste Authority has drop off sites located throughout Redwood County to help you recycle them:**

Tersteeg's Store	Wabasso City Office Building
Wanda State Bank	Morgan City Office Building
Runnings Store	Bellevue City Office Building
Redwood Falls City Office Building	Walnut Grove City Office Building

**Recycling Facility in Redwood Falls\*\***

\*\*Please do NOT put them in your recycling cart or rural recycling collection box

\*Holiday lights can include decorative string lights from the following holidays (and more!):

- ♦ Valentines Day   ♦ Easter   ♦ Halloween   ♦ Christmas
- ♦ St. Patrick's Day   ♦ Independence Day   ♦ Thanksgiving

The following holiday items are NOT recyclable through our program:

- ♦ Wreaths   ♦ Wire lawn decorations (deer, snowmen, etc.)
- ♦ Christmas trees   ♦ Jack-o-lanterns (real OR artificial)

**Redwood/Renville Regional Solid Waste Authority:**

**507-637-1800  
 OR  
 320-523-8002**

