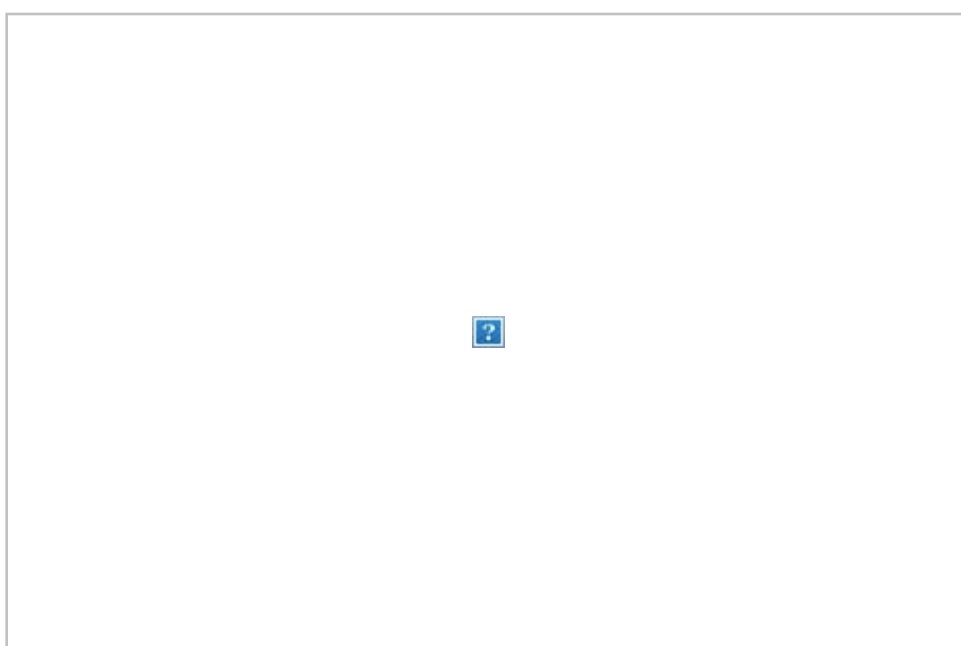


MAY 2004 ISSUE

GROUND BREAKING

Dream Becomes a Reality!

At long last...MAFMIC's new home will soon be a reality. **Jerry Zenke**, Chairman of the Building Committee, **Greg Gangelhoff**, Committee Member, MAFMIC Chairman **Gwen Batalden**, **Sherry Ask**, MAFMIC President and **Marcus Marsh**, Government Affairs Manager were at the new location on Friday, April 30, 2004 to "perform" our ground breaking ceremony. Truthfully, the ground was actually "broken" on April 5.....the footings were poured and by the time you read this, the concrete slab will have been poured.



Left to right: Marcus Marsh, Gwen Batalden, Jerry Zenke, Greg Gangelhoff and Sherry Ask.

What a day to remember! Besides "breaking the ground", we agreed on a purchase price to sell our existing office. Mahler & Associates Architecture (Graeme Mahler, our architect for the new building) has agreed to purchase our unit and of course, the sooner we're out, the sooner he can move in! As I've been saying all along... (with my fingers crossed, of course) we will be in our new home right around the first of August. Thank you, one and all, for your generous donations to our building fund. We couldn't have done it without you and your continued support.

Sherry Ask, President

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

By: Marcus Marsh

Legislature Limp Along ~ The 2004 Legislature is a session that seems to be going nowhere. Legislators are still recovering from a brutal 2003 session when they had to address a budget deficit of over \$4 billion.

The existing budget surplus can take care of the current shortfall of less than 200 million dollars plus the fact that we are less than a year into the two year budget cycle; thus the only bill Legislators really want is a Bonding Bill. In spite of this, there is a good chance of a Special Session. The regular session is scheduled (by the State Constitution) to adjourn at midnight on Monday, May 17th.

The House of Representatives is up for election in November while the Senate and the Governor are not. The Senate and the Governor face their next election in 2006. This factor is contributing to the politics of the 2004 session.

We continue to work on the Insurance Fraud Bill H.F. 2640 Representative Greg David's (R-Preston) and S.F. 2607 Senator Linda Scheid (D-Brooklyn Park). Calls of support to your Representative and Senator are appreciated. Our MAFMIC Bill to clarify cancellations is waiting for action on the House and Senate floors. The bill is H.F. 2777 Representative Laura Brod (R-New Prague) and S.F. 2620 Senator Dallas Sams (D-Staples).

This year, as we do every year, we worked to defeat harmful bills to the insurance industry and at this point we have been successful. However, there is still time during the next three weeks full of long floor sessions, for those who wish us harm.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *Why does a slight tax increase cost you two hundred dollars and a substantial tax cut save you thirty cents?*

TECHNOLOGY CORNER

By: Niles Deden, Technology Committee Member

Goodbye 3.5! Say goodbye to your old 3.5" floppy drive – it's going the same way as the 5.25" drives. Some new computers are being shipped without a floppy drive at all! The 1.44 megabyte disks do not have the storage capacity to keep up with today's larger files.

The first replacement for the floppy is a USB digital drive, also called a USB flash drive. These drives are a flash memory stick that plugs into one of your computer's USB ports and acts like an additional drive. They are about the size of a large car key. Any computer automatically recognizes the new drive and assigns it a drive letter. There is no software to load. You save or copy files to the digital drive the same way you write files to your A: drive or your C: drive. A digital drive is faster than a physical drive and holds a lot more data. They are a great way to transfer files from one computer to another or to take files home to work on. A 256 megabyte USB digital drive costs less than \$50. A 512 megabyte drive is less than \$100.

The next step up in data storage is a DVD writer. Yes, you can write data to a DVD the same way you do with a CD burner. The price has dropped to under \$150 for the DVD writer and blank DVD disks as less than a dollar each. You can add one to your computer underneath your CD writer. The value of a DVD is capacity. You can store the same amount of data on one DVD (4.7 Gig) that you would store on seven CD's. You can probably backup all the important files on your computer onto one DVD and do it for less than a dollar. But don't even think about copying DVD movies like you previously copied VHS tapes. The DVD movies are copyrighted and encrypted.

The third big step in data storage capacity is NetDisk. NetDisk is made by Ximeta. It is an external digital hard drive that connects to your computer with a USB cable **or** plugs into your Ethernet router with a standard cat 5 cable. These are very affordable drives. A 160 gigabyte unit sells for a little over \$200. This size gives you the capacity to backup your entire computer in one step.

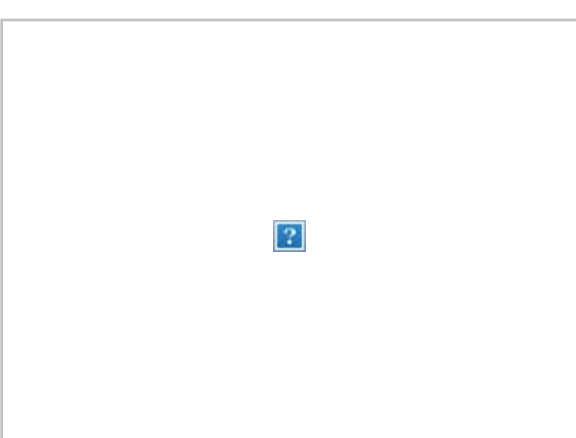
Ximeta has developed the technology to plug this drive into your office Ethernet so that any of the computers on your system can have access to it. You can backup multiple files from multiple computers on the same drive. These huge drives are cheap enough that you can buy two. Make a weekly backup on one and take it home. Next week, use the second drive and switch.

Thanks to the Internet, another storage option is renting space on a commercial storage web server. Web2B, for example, offers 10 gigabytes of storage for \$25 per month. You can automatically backup selected files every night, and hold copies of backed up files for 30 days. This option lets you automatically handle your off site storage needs, although you need a high speed Internet connection to be practical; a dial-up would be way too slow. \$300 per year for off site storage might seem a little expensive, but ask yourself how much money you would be willing to pay to restore lost files after a hard disk crashes. Most of us would be willing to pay thousands.

The 3.5" floppy is on the way out. I don't think any of us will miss it. There are plenty of new storage options that have more capacity, are faster, and are reasonably priced. You now have absolutely no reason not to have good backup copies of your files.

OWATONNA FARM SHOW

During March, MAFMIC member companies, under the guidance of the Marketing Committee, participated in the Owatonna Farm Show. Pictured below are **Gary Dahle** (left) and **Danny Linbo** (center) of **Vernon Edda Mutual** changing shifts with **Jim Nelson** (right), Manager of **Vasa-Spring Garden Mutual**.



MAFMIC would like to thank **Mark Lageveen**, **Grinnell Mutual**, who organized the workers for the Owatonna show and also all of the member company representatives who helped promote the mutual insurance industry at the show. The next show in which the MAFMIC Marketing Committee participates will be FarmFest on August 3-5. **Judy Schroeder** is the organizer of this event; if you would like to participate, please contact her at (320) 826-2374.

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

MAFMIC would like to welcome the following new associate members who were approved for membership at the March Board Meeting.

Benefits & Incentives Company

Contact: Richard E. Keefe
Phone: (612) 861-2090
E-mail: rek1904@msn.com

East Metro Clean 'n' Press, Inc.

Contact: Dan Kalsen
Phone: (651) 738-6504
E-mail: dan@cleanpress.com

Quality Claims Service

Contact: Terry Lange
Phone: (507) 530-7993
E-mail: tw17@charter.net

WEB2B Payment Solutions

Contact: Paul J. Erdal
Phone: (866) 647-5959
E-mail: perdal@web2bpaymentsolutions.com

WELCOME ABOARD!!!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Golf Outing ~ The MAFMIC Scholarship Golf Outing will be held on July 29th at the Little Crow Country Club in Spicer. This event is open to everyone associated with the township mutual industry . . . and their friends or family! You don't need to be a good golfer; the only requirement is a desire to have fun while supporting a good cause. Net profits are donated to the Scholarship Fund.

NAMIC Ag Risk Inspection School ~ NAMIC, in cooperation with MAFMIC, is offering an Ag Risk Inspection School on August 17-19 at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel (formerly Radisson Hotel South). For more information, watch future issues of the NewsBulletin or visit NAMIC's website at www.namic.org/seminars/agrisk.asp.

REMINDER: NON-REPLACEMENT COST

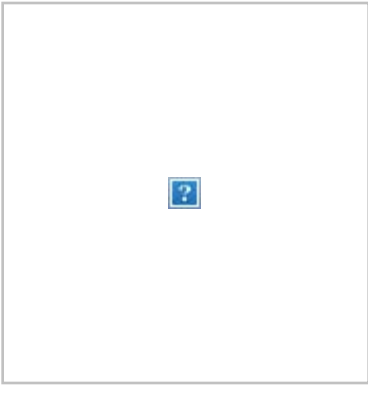
Chapter 65A.10, Subd. 2, requires that if a homeowner's policy does **not** provide replacement cost coverage for personal property, the declarations page must indicate this by containing the term 'nonreplacement cost'. This applies to all policies written with the MAFMIC PH-1 Policy.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The MAFMIC Scholarship Selection Committee, comprised of members of the auxiliary, met in March to review the applications received. The Selection Committee recommended that eight scholarships be awarded for the 2004-05 school year. Selections were made by blind assessment after confirming the eligibility of the applicants. Congratulations to the following individuals who will be awarded scholarships.

- Kelly Carlson, North Branch ~ Chisago Lake Fire Ins.
- Anna Fitzsimmons, Good Thunder ~ Pleasant Mound
- Amy Groen, Renville ~ Leenthrop Farmers Mutual
- Heather Listul, Clarkfield ~ Norwegian Mutual
- Danny Omann, Sartell ~ St. Joseph Mutual
- Patrick Ryan, Goodhue ~ Vasa Spring Garden Mutual
- Luke Stenoien, Underwood ~ Sverdrup Mutual
- Katherine Stuewe, Norwood ~ Has San Lake Mutual

HONORED FOR SERVICE



Pictured at left is **Dave Nelson**, Manager of **Palmyra Farmers Mutual** who was recently honored for 20 years of service to the company. He was presented a plaque in recognition of his years of service and dedication. Policyholders, members of the community, board members and guests attended an open house appreciation held at the company office.

Recipes Still Needed! Thanks to everyone who has sent one (or more) recipes for the auxiliary's cookbook project. To date we have received 400 recipes, but our goal is 600! If you

have not submitted a recipe, please consider doing so ~ the deadline has been extended to June 1st. You can call the office for a copy of the form or download it off MAFMIC's website (look in News & Notes).

THANKS . . . for the kind words! The following comments were received from **Ken Husen**, Secretary/Manager of **Beaver Creek Mutual**. *"I wanted to commend you, your staff and all the people who put on the informative 2004 Short Course. I have attended many meetings of this type in my insurance career. This was my first time to attend a Township Mutual Short Course and felt it was worth my time to attend."*

Apologies to Support Staff ~ MAFMIC would like to extend our apologies to everyone who was looking forward to attending the recently cancelled Support Staff Seminars. We are as disappointed as you that the lack of registrations forced us to make this unpopular decision. Thank you to everyone who sent us comments and suggestions to increase registration numbers. The Education Committee will review your comments at their upcoming meeting and then make a decision on rescheduling the meeting later this year.

Management Changes ~ **South Central Mutual** in Blue Earth announces that effective April 5th, **Mark Hagebak** has accepted the position of manager with the company. His email address is: mhagebak@scmutual.com.

Manual Updates ~ MAFMIC's office is in the process of compiling company statistics and updating membership and committee information. Those updates will be available soon and copies will be mailed to each member company.

MAFMIC E-Bulletin ~ As a reminder, the MAFMIC Board of Directors has asked that future issues of the NewsBulletin be sent via email to all subscribers who are able to receive the electronic version of the publication. To help us out, **please send your email address to info@mafmic.org**.

Summer Hours ~ Beginning in June, MAFMIC's office will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday thru Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to noon on Fridays.