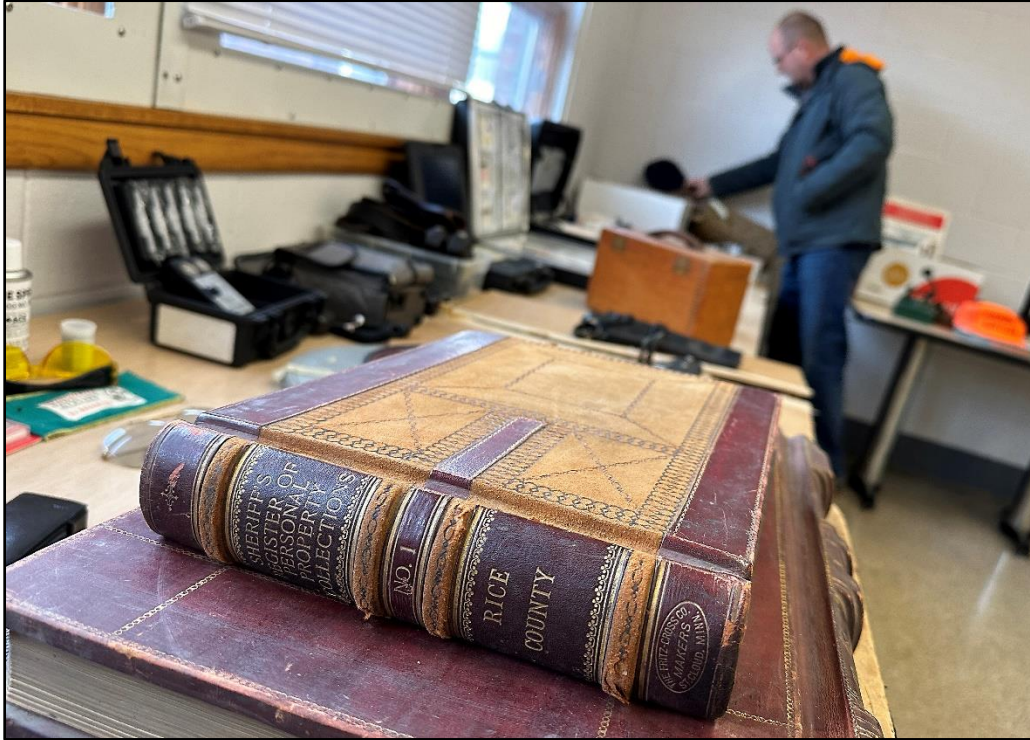




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For immediate release



Capt. Nathan Budin looks over some of the Rice County Sheriff's Office memorabilia he and other deputies have collected. The collected items will be used in a display in the new Public Safety Center, set to open in fall 2024. (Rice County photo)

Sheriff's Office collection will showcase its nearly 150-year history

Nathan Budin has amassed quite a collection.

An old radar gun, a few well-worn ledgers, a vintage investigations kit complete with fingerprint lifters and a variety of delicate brushes in plastic packaging to eliminate potential contamination sit among the dozens of treasures laid out on three long folding tables in the Jail Annex.

There's a pair of retired Sheriff Troy Dunn's old motorcycle boots, a half dozen helmets and hats, old cameras, a CB radio, wooden night sticks, a flashlight with a sensor designed to detect the smell of alcohol on a driver's breath, an unused book of traffic tickets and even a laminated business card from Rice County's longest serving sheriff, Dave Schweisthal.

Last week, Budin took possession of the newest artifact, a section of iron bars likely from a window in the county's historic jail, built after the original structure was condemned in 1910. The piece, which Budin hopes to frame, had rested along a wall in what had been the old jail for years. When the office's occupant, Deputy Administrator Rick Gieseke, learned of the project, he knew right where it needed to be, and delivered it to Budin the following day.

Most of these gems, Budin says, will be used to fill a large, recessed display case built into a wall in the new Public Safety Center, helping to tell the history of the Rice County Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Jesse Thomas, asked Budin to head up the project partly because he knew of the captain's interest in the history of the Sheriff's Office. Over the years, Budin and several other deputies have stashed away the memorabilia, hoping to someday create a display showing not just the items, but to tell the story of the Rice County Sheriff's Office and of law enforcement.

Thomas says that sharing the office's history and preserving its artifacts isn't just a nicety, it's a necessity.

"It's important for people to understand where the Rice County Sheriff's Office used to be as well see how far we've advanced in law enforcement," said Thomas.

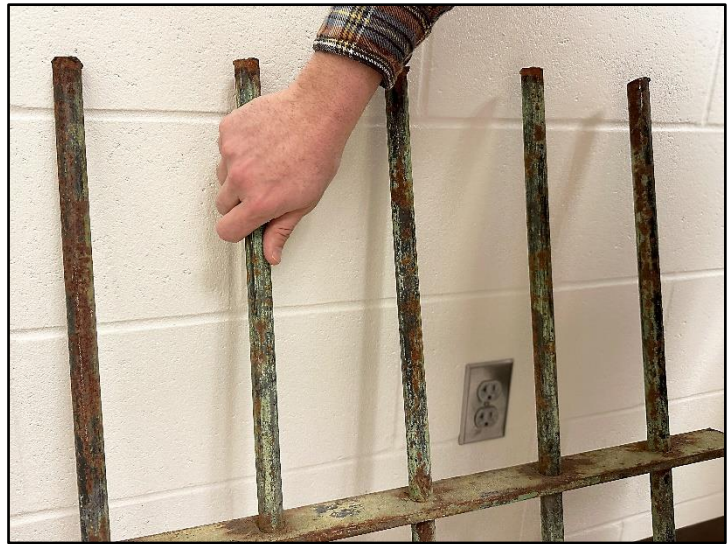
Sheriff's Office leaders also hope to display a jail ledger that lists the names of notorious bank robbers Bob, Cole and Jim Younger, who with brothers Frank and Jesse James, held up the First National Bank of Northfield in September 1876. The Rice County Historical Society, which was given the ledger several years ago, has agreed to a short-term loan of the nearly 150-year-old book so it, too, can be showcased.

Sheriff's officials hope to give a second nod to the office's distinguished history by combining relevant images to create a large photo mural for a hallway leading to the Safety Center's training room. Chief Deputy Joe Yetzer, who's leading that project, said the wall is 20' long so there's plenty of room to be creative.

They're also planning to remove a cell door from the current jail and recess it into yet another wall, showing how detention facilities have changed over time.

The Rice County Sheriff's Office dates back to 1856, three years after Rice County's founding. The first sheriff, Charles Wood, a native of Vermont who moved to Faribault in 1854, served for just two years. Records show Rice County didn't elect another sheriff until 1871 when Patrick Byrnes of Walcott Township was sworn in.

Since that time, there have been significant changes in policing – everything from uniforms to protocols to investigative tools.



TOP: Bars, believed to be from the former Rice County Jail building at 118 Third St. NW, Faribault, sat in a county office before being brought to Budin to be used as part of a display. BOTTOM: Capt. Nathan Budin holds two vials of substances manufactured by the Fargo Company and used in the mid-20th century by Rice County Sheriff's investigators. (Rice County photos)

Budin says he'll continue adding to the collection, realizing that current day tools and equipment will someday be as unusual –and interesting -- as that CB radio.

“We’re keeping them because there will be people who appreciate it in years to come,” he said.

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