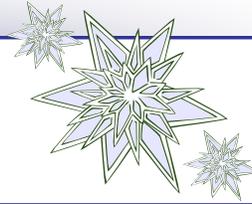


# Department Updates



Barron County, Wisconsin

## County Clerk

### DeeAnn Cook, County Clerk

I hope everyone takes the opportunity to welcome our new Deputy County Clerk, Jennifer Horstman. Over 120 applications were received for the position and she was chosen as the top candidate. She has some big shoes to fill and will do her best trying to do just that. She was able to spend a couple days training with Barb before her last day. We will all miss Barb and are very happy

for her as she enters this new phase in her life.

The only primary in the county is set for Feb. 16 in the City of Rice Lake where the number of candidates for their at large position will be narrowed. 9 individuals filed their candidacy but a maximum of 8 candidates can appear on the April ballot for 4 seats thus requiring the primary.

Our municipal clerks group is researching the possibility of purchasing reasonably priced, re-usable ballot bags. A sample has been ordered and I will be presenting our idea with hopes of approval from GAB at conference in March. It would not only be a cost effective idea but would also be "green". Several other counties have expressed interest in purchasing the bags if we can get approval from GAB and negotiate a fair price.

## Health & Human Services

### Judy Demers, Director

\*\*Recent articles in local newspapers were misleading to residents. The articles released by the State appeared to indicate that there was additional funding available for the energy assistance program from the Federal government. The fact of the matter is that the additional \$31 million referenced in the articles was already included in the funding that was allocated to counties. Many phone calls of inquiry were received regarding this matter. Clarification was received from the State that there is no additional funding at this time.

\*\*Our agency was notified that we were not chosen to participate in the Alternative Response pilot for which we applied; however, we have been invited to participate in training as it becomes available. This will help us to be in a bet-

ter position for the next round of funding for pilots and when this approach becomes state-wide policy.

\*\*Legislation was passed effective February 1, 2010, that mandates that the public be notified when a death, serious injury, or egregious incident occurs in a child's alternate care setting. The previous language was that the information was to be 'made available' to the public. The process will now be that counties must notify the Division of Safety and Permanence within 2 days of the incident; the state will then publish the information on their website.

\*\*Changes are underway in the child foster care system. Court-ordered kinship placements (ie. placements with relatives) must now be licensed. Also, a new level of care system is being implemented where pay-

ment rates will be at three different levels of care based on the needs of children being placed. These two items are creating a significant workload increase for our foster care certifiers. The future state-wide goal is to have more rate regulation so there are more uniform fixed rates among providers providing services to children with similar needs. The 4-year plan is to implement a system of performance-based contracting with foster care providers statewide.

\*\*New requirements in the Child Care program are that background checks must be completed on the primary provider every quarter. There is a concern that this could result in a reduction in the number of child care providers due to the cost to this requirement. The cost of background checks is \$10 each.



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### Happy Retirement

**Barbara Balts**

Thank You for more than

34 years of service to

Barron County

# Administration

## Jeff French, Administrator

### Property Committee:

Building Use Policy: referred matter to Steve Olson for his research into purchase of security gates and locks for stairwell doors. Item to be brought back to Committee in a future month.

Discussed Communications Upgrades and expressed concerns as to cost overruns.

Approved \$75,000 carryover from 2009 to 2010 in Capital Improvement Capital Outlay fund for IT purchases not completed in 2009.

Approved completion of Moon Lake Dam Project, total costs of \$234,044 with \$285,000 being budgeted in total over the years 2008 & 2009 and because this project was under budget in total allowed completion of fishing pier at Anglers Park near Chetek.

Approved resolution to withdraw from Wild Rivers Trail Commission.

Approved grant applications to Wisconsin Waterway Commission for Waldo Carlson Park for Boat Landing, Restroom Facilities and Parking lot. Effectively these are matching grants and the appropriate dollars have been budgeted in the Capital Improvement Capital Outlay Fund.

Received staff updates on:

- WI County Forest Association Spring Meeting
- Martin Island
- Energy Usage
- Enforcement of Conservation Policies
- Camping Reservation Software
- Bidder's Forum

Reaffirmed original offer of \$150,000 for 80 acres of forest land in Town of Doyle conditional upon receiving no-interest loan from Dept. of Natural Resources.

Directed staff to approach land owner on parcel of property located across from the Lower Vermillion Boat Landing.

### LCC/Extension:

Approved resolution for control of Japanese Knotweed Control Grant

Supported resolution to delay the implementation of Farmland Preservation Rezoning Conversion Fee.

Approved 2009 Wildlife Damage Program Crop Prices and approval of six 2009 wildlife damage claims. #2 corn \$3.44/bushel, soybeans \$9.83/bushel, non gmo soybeans, \$11.39/bushel.

Postponed to March special assessment for additional WCLA dues.

### Executive:

Approved resolutions in support of Federal Funding for Welfare Fraud Investigation and Withdrawal from Wild Rivers Trail Commission.

Approved changes to Bereavement/Retirement Policy for County Board Members

Approved meal reimbursement in excess of County Policy as grant funds will cover the additional costs.

Tabled until 2011 budget review process the consolidation of Child Support and Health and Human Services

Reviewed and discussed Newspaper cost analysis; this item will be forwarded to the entire County Board for review.

Discussed communication of budget error and acknowledged that Executive Committee has full confidence in Administrator and Leadership Team.

Tabled indefinitely Pay for Performance.

Discussed Communications upgrades and cost overruns thereto with this item to again be discussed at February 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Approved sale of Taxable Bonds over a twelve year period for Waste-to-Energy plant electrical upgrades, sale of bonds to be placed on February 22<sup>nd</sup> County Board meeting.

Postponed to February 18<sup>th</sup> meeting the payment of taxes on individual parcels of property for which the County purchased as a part of the Hwy 63 rail corridor which was turned into an ATV and snowmobile trail.

Allowed change in Board cancelled check policy whereby the Treasurer, Administrator and Finance Director are allowed to reissue cancelled checks instead of taking them through Executive Committee. By Statute these funds are held in-trust for ten years.

Received updates on:

- Tax Amnesty – no change in policy recommended
- Rural Electric Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLAG), potential of County receiving \$1.1M zero interest loan for rail project.
- Staff is continuing to work on changes in how special assessments are handled by County at time of purchase of property from municipality
- Barron to Almena rail corridor – received information from WWRTA members. Almena business and government groups to fund their 20% match from local dollars not County funds.
- Discussed information/action items on agendas. Would like all Committees to indicate on their agendas whether or not the item in question is informational only or requires Committee action.

# Veterans Service Office

## Scott Bachowski, VSO

Barron County has been tentatively selected as a host site for a Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Supermarket of benefits for 2010. In conjunction with Washburn County, we have included a

Women Veterans Wellness program into this event as well. The event will be held on July 29-30, 2010. The event will take place in the Rice Lake Armory at 307 E Barker Street. We are asking for Veteran Service Organization support for running a

coffee bar, parking lot assistance (i.e. helping handicapped veterans into building), and a coffee/donut bar on Friday morning. More details will be made available in the future.

## Treasurer

### Vonnie Ritchie, Treasurer

#### Tax Collection

We are in the process of calculating the settlements from the municipal treasurers. Payments to all taxing jurisdictions are due on February 20<sup>th</sup>. I will have the details available in the March updates. We will be filing the Tax District Settlements, the Lot-

tery and Gaming Credit Report, and the First Dollar Credit Report, with the State of Wisconsin later this month.

#### Tax Foreclosure

The Notice of Commencement of Proceeding In Rem to Foreclose Tax Liens and the Petition for Judgment Vesting Title to Barron County, along with a list of tax parcels

with delinquent 2006 taxes, was filed with the Circuit Court on February 4, 2010. The deadline for the owners to pay the 2006 tax is April 23, 2010. The list will be published in all the County Newspapers from February 10, 2010, through February 24, 2010. The list of parcels is also on the Barron County website under "What's New".

## Aging / Aging & Disability Resource Center

### Charlene Oftedahl, Director

The Meals-On-Wheels Association of America has approved us for a \$15,000 award as a result of a competitive Walmart Impact Grant Application submitted by Leslie Fijalkiewicz, Elderly Nutrition Program Manager. The funding is designated for the purchase of a vehicle to be used for rural meal delivery, as well as for making home visits to determine program eligibility. Local donations will be used for the 10% required match.

On Friday, March 19, a nationally known speaker on dementia, will be here at the Government Center to present a day long workshop for family caregivers and employ-

ees who work in home care, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and other agencies. This opportunity was planned by members of the Barron County Community Dementia Care Network. Sponsors include the Office on Aging, the Senior Review, Luther Midelfort Northland – Mayo Health System, Marshfield Clinic, Northwest Cooperative Employment Program, and Monroe Manor Assisted Living. Contact Gloria Vaughn, Dementia Specialist in the Office on Aging for more information.

Some randomly selected customers of the ADRC of Barron, Rusk, and Washburn Counties are currently receiving phone calls as part of a statewide customer satisfaction survey. Our ADRC was one of 10 chosen by

the Wisconsin Bureau on Aging and Disability Resources for participation in their 2010 qualitative research project to determine if customers had their resource options clearly explained by friendly and helpful ADRC staff.

The Committee on Aging recently met with the Namekagon Transit manager and the director of Sawyer County Human Services to discuss expanding public transit to include door-to-door, shared ride taxi service in several Barron County communities for one or two days per week. Details are still being worked out. Namekagon Transit has state and federal funding available for this purpose. No county levy is required.

## Human Resources

### Rachael Richie, HR Director

<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Office / Department</u>	<u>Incumbent</u>	<u>Date Filled</u>	<u>New / Replacement</u>
Child Support Specialist	Child Support	Sue Richter	1/13/10	Replacement
Economic Support Specialist	Health & Human Services	Scott Venegas	1/26/10	Replacement
Deputy County Clerk / County Board Secretary	County Clerk	Jennifer Horstman	2/10/10	Replacement
Assistant Corporation Counsel	Corporation Counsel	Samantha Mohns	3/15/10	Replacement
Community Service Coordinator	Circuit Court	Recruiting		Replacement
Finance Director	Administration	Recruiting		Replacement

- The AFSCME units (Highway & Courthouse) have filed for mediation/arbitration regarding the 2010-2011 contracts.
- The annual employee holiday celebration was held 1/28/10 with over 50 employees / guests attending! A good time was had by all!
- The 2010 American Cancer Society Run/Walk will be held April 24th and Barron County will again have a team participating. If you are interested in running/walking and / or donating, contact the Department of Administration.

# Economic Development

David Miller, Director

The 2010 BCEDC Awards Banquet:

Thursday, April 22, 2010, Turtleback Conference Center, Rice Lake, WI

Keynote Speaker "Famous Dave Anderson" Reservations are now open: 800-529-4148 or [david.miller@co.barron.wi.us](mailto:david.miller@co.barron.wi.us)

Cost: \$20.00, includes banquet dinner and program. Our dinner will be delicious, but if you can't make the fine dining, and you want to attend the Keynote and Awards program, you may do so for \$10.00. Just let us know if you will be attending the full program or just the Dave Anderson Presentation.

The Continuing Education class, "How to Start a Business" begins March 23<sup>rd</sup> at WITC on the Rice Lake Campus. For more information, please call WITC at 715-234-7082 and ask for Continuing Education.

Current and New Projects:

The total project count for 2009, was 357. This was up by 135 projects from 2008, due primarily to increased assistance requested of the Economic Development Department and the BCEDC by businesses struggling with the state of the economy. As 2009 came to an end, there were 69 new start-up projects in-process with 30 projects rolled-over from 2008, still active throughout the year. Ninety-nine remain active and will roll to 2010. Planned expansion projects leveled at 10 since the first of 2009 and there were seven that rolled over from 2008, so there will be 17 rolled over to 2010. 2010 has started off with 40 new projects to the date of this writing, February 7, 2010.

As of January 7<sup>th</sup>, the Department has reviewed and is currently assisting with 10

start-up business projects; 6 expansions; 4 Tourism promotion activities; 8 educational/grant search activities and 4 marketing and PR events with our economic development collaborations. The balance of the projects are general economic development activities.

The Department, in collaboration with the Barron County Economic Development Corporation (BCEDC) and the UW-Extension Office are presently conducting a Business Retention & Expansion Survey and Labor Market Study later this fall. Over 120 businesses are being contacted for both studies, initially by the Department and UW-Extension and then by members from the BCEDC, who handle the pick-up of the surveys and person-to-person contact with the businesses. In an effort to compare the economies within our region, Polk and Rusk counties will be conducting the same studies at the same time. The results for each of the counties will be analyzed by the WI Department of Commerce on the Business Retention & Expansion side and through UW Extension on the Labor Market side of the studies. This project has been in the planning stage since June of this year and the results are expected to be final with public presentations planned for March of 2010.

New Tourism websites: You should visit a new site at <http://www.wistcroixarea.com> and take look around. The website now includes the counties of Barron, Burnett, Polk and Washburn in addition to the three Casino operations at Turtle Lake, Danbury and Hertel and it also provides information on the St. Croix River Valley, all in our mini-region. ALSO...check out another tourism site developed by our Northwest Wisconsin regional ITBEC tourism collaboration.

Visit it at <http://www.nwwidowntowns.com>

...where you can take a cyber tour and plan your visit to the memorable downtowns throughout Northwest Wisconsin. Our downtowns offer unique events, historic sites and top-notch shopping, dining and lodging opportunities. Enjoy! Check it out and have fun!!

This just in from the folks at WEN and a bit too late for the Newsletter:

Several opportunities are available for WI companies to obtain funding (\$750 - \$5,000) for the BIO International Conference, May 3-5 at McCormick Place in Chicago. There are a couple of programs with varying application deadlines - the first deadline is 2/19. Please share the information below with companies on your mailing list who may be interested in funding opportunities to participate in the BIO 2010 International Conference in Chicago. Link to more information:

<http://www.bioforward.org/BIO2010.php>  
For more information: Karen M. Dettinger, Ph.D. at 608-236-4756 / [kdettinger@bioforward.org](mailto:kdettinger@bioforward.org)

From the early requests, 2010 is shaping up to be just as busy as 2009. If you know of a company in need of assistance, I always have room for more! But do ask them to call in advance, as there is no one to provide counseling if they drop in and I'm not available. All it takes is a phone call or an Email to me, as this process has worked extremely well over the years. If you want a glimpse of upcoming activities, be sure to review the January Economic Development Newsletter at [www.barroncounty.com](http://www.barroncounty.com) where all you need to do is click on "BCEDC News" and the PDF will open for you.

# County Forest

John Cisek, Forester

Timber harvest operations continue in the Town of Maple Plain on Barron/Polk Co. Line Rd. The Kelley Lk. Sale has been completed hauling of wood products continues and drivers should be cautious of trucks entering the roadway. The Barron/Polk C. Line aspen sale continue to the north and is approximately one-third complete.

In the Town of Cedar Lake, Park Falls Hard-

woods of Park Falls Wisconsin continues to complete an oak shelterwood harvest north of the Swamp Rd. near Goose Lk., motorist are urged to drive with caution.

In the Town of Doyle, the Silver Cr. timber sale will begin. Wolf River Logging from Stanley Wisconsin will be conducting a combination of selective hardwood harvest and aspen regeneration harvest. Harvesting operation will remove approximately

370 cords of aspen and hardwood pulpwood and 36 MBF (thousand board feet) of hardwood sawtimber.

# Highway Department

## Mark Servi, Highway Commissioner

The construction season for road projects in Barron County is beginning to take shape.

On the State Highway System, there are several major projects planned on USH 53. The first, which was let in January, consists of concrete pavement replacement of all lanes of USH 53 from USH 8 north to 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The cost of this project is \$17 million dollars. During construction, traffic will be single lane in each direction running one side of USH 53, while the other lanes are reconstructed. This means that the existing northbound lanes will be closed and traffic running on the existing south bound lanes, and then the traffic will be switched to the new north bound lanes and the south bound will be reconstructed. There will be crossovers at the ends of the

project, as well as at the off ramp locations. This project is expected to start in the spring, with a November 1, 2010 completion date.

A second project on USH 53 is scheduled to be let in May of 2010. It consists of replacement of the asphalt pavement from the Chippewa County Line to USH 8. This work will be done with lane closures. Traffic will be restricted to one lane in each direction on the existing road.

It is interesting to note that there is construction on USH 53 in Barron, Washburn and Douglas Counties this summer. These are all projects funded with ARRA dollars. So some of the recovery monies did make it north of STH 29.

On the county system, CTH C from CTH NN to the Rusk County Line will be reconstructed in the spring/early summer. The road will remain open to traffic, with

flagged work zones during construction operations. Culverts were replaced last fall on this section of CTH C, in preparation of this paving project. CTH K from CTH D to the Turtle Lake Village limits will be reconstructed also. The culverts will be replaced in late spring/early summer, and the road will be repaved in the fall. These projects are primarily county funded.

The City of Rice Lake also has received ARRA funding for the reconstruction of Main Street thru the City. This work is also scheduled for this construction season, and consists primarily of pavement replacement.

As you can see, it is shaping up to be a busy construction season in Barron County. Please plan to leave more time if you are going to be traveling in the area of these projects, as it is certain that traffic will not be moving at the usual pace.

# Corporation Counsel

## John Muench, Corporation Counsel

Assistant Corporation Counsel Position. Attorney Samantha Mohns has accepted the position of Assistant Corporation Counsel with a tentative start date of March 15<sup>th</sup>. Samantha will be filling the position that became vacant with the retirement of Robert Rogers on November 30, 2009. She will be bringing to the position her experience in civil commitments including

guardianships, protective placements and Chapter 51 commitments, as well as a strong background in child support enforcement. We look forward to having Samantha join us here in Barron County.

Rules and Procedures/General Code. Coming up in April following the County Board elections there will be the reorganizational meeting, and time to review and revise the

County Board Rules and Procedures. If anyone has suggestions or requests to be reviewed, please forward to the County Administrator or Corporation Counsel, so those items can be discussed. We are also in the process of finalizing the update of the General Code as well. Any questions or comments on that process should be directed to the Corporation Counsel's Office.

# Child Support

## John Muench, Director

Staffing: Long time Payment Counselor Carol Hicks retired December 30, 2009. The vacancy was filled by Susan Richter who was the Fiscal/Administrative Specialist. That position is presently vacant with a request to refill pending. The Fiscal Specialist position is a critical position within the agency and is responsible for loading and tracking court orders for child support whether there is a case open in the Child Support Agency or not. (The Barron County Child Support Agency has nearly 3000 open cases, but there are another 1000 active cases that do not utilize Child Support Agency services). The position is also responsible for making financial adjustments on the State child support system

that tracks support payments. It goes without saying that accurate recordkeeping of these financial obligations is vitally important, and tends to be an area of extreme emotional volatility for individuals.

Internship: The agency is utilizing some of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) monies to fund an internship position with a student from WITC. The intern, working 20 hours per week, is using a web-based locator system to find missing individuals who have a child support obligation. The hierarchy for the search is to first work through Criminal Non-support cases filed with the District Attorney's Office in which there are outstanding arrest warrants. Next, are cases in

which the agency has outstanding civil arrest warrants. In cases where individuals are located, a request to law enforcement goes out to serve the warrants and pick up the individuals. Additional ARRA monies have been allocated to extradite the individuals back to Wisconsin if necessary. The internship position is also assisting Child Support Enforcement workers in locating individuals who have child support orders, but have stopped making the court ordered payment and have moved without providing notice. The purpose of the position is to clean up the warrant list and to enforce the court orders for support so that monies come to support the children who are the subject of the order.