

Department Updates

BARRON COUNTY

April 2011

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County Clerk

DeeAnn Cook, County Clerk

Turnout for the Spring Election was extremely high. A "good" turnout for a Spring Election is around 20%. For this Spring Election voter turnout in Barron County was 35%. Unfortunately, some municipalities ran out of ballots and had to photocopy and hand count some ballots at the end of the night. Most other counties in the state experienced the same issue. All of our results were in by 10:15pm. The Justice of the Supreme Court was the hotly contested race and the morning after, it is still too close to call. There is a potential for a statewide recount. Special thanks again to Vonnie Ritchie, Pam French, Linda Barta and Julie Henningsen who volunteered their time to help take in results on Election Night. We posted results to our website as they came in like we usually do.

On March 22, 2011 the GAB Board approved the recommendation from the Ad Hoc Committee I am serving on to move the fall primary back to the 3rd or 4th week in July so Wisconsin can become compliant with the MOVE Act. Their recommendation will now move on to the Legislation for consideration. Our committee has discovered that moving the spring primary to run in conjunction with the November Partisan Election is not a possibility so we will need to come up with other options. Due to redistricting this year the dates for the 2012 spring elections

can't change significantly but we will work on dates for future years and come up with recommendations that will go before the GAB Board for consideration.

The final estimated census figures we received for our county's population turned out to be quite inaccurate. When we received our firm census numbers we learned that the population is 2,529 less than the estimated figures rendering the preliminary work on the redistricting maps useless. Rhonda Sukys checked with some colleagues and found that they also experienced similar inconsistencies between the estimated population and the actual. Since we now have firm numbers to work with, Rhonda has been working hard on coming up with options for our districts for the next 10 years. County wide, our population grew from 44,963 in 2000 to 45,870 in 2010; a net increase of 907. The largest percentage of growth in population came in Towns of Sumner and Dovre. Sixteen of the municipalities in Barron County actually saw a decrease in population over the last 10 years. The largest percentage of decrease in population was in Towns of Barron and Vance Creek. Again, our goal will be to keep as many municipalities whole as possible avoiding any unnecessary splits thus reducing the number of ballot styles. All municipalities have been invited to participate in the process.

Circuit Court

Judge James Babler, Circuit Branch 2

Courts End 2010 with a Budget Surplus!

In these days of economic uncertainty and budget shortfalls, we are proud to do our best to stay within our budget and save taxpayer money whenever we can. In 2010, the Courts generated revenue \$112,732.01 higher than budgeted and expended \$23,928 less than budgeted for a **net gain** to the 2010 county budget of **\$136,660.01!**

While every year is different and there are many variables out of our control, the Judges and Clerk of Courts staff work hard to keep the expenditures under control and maximize revenue collections. The success in collections is in good part a result of an excellent partnership between Maggie Nelson of the Clerk of Court and Judy Lansin in the Corporation Counsel's office.

We will continue to look for additional efficiencies in our system and new ways to enhance our collection efforts.



Department of Land Services

Justin Everson, Soil & Water Conservation

Conservation Planning Continues

Farm Service Agency has made it a priority to find fields throughout the county that have not previously been determined. As a result we've had a steady flow of farmers coming through our door requesting conservation plans for fields that have been determined as highly erodible.

Nutrient Mgt. Farmer Education Program

I have scheduled two dates this month to complete nutrient mgt. plans with farmers enrolled in our class that have current soil test data. For those that need to soil test, they will contact me for planning as their results come back.

Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative

DATCP sent out information on March 25th introducing the modification of a farmland preservation agreement. If a landowner with a current FPP agreement wishes to, they may modify their agreement and follow the new standards. By modifying an original agreement they would be eligible

to collect the improved tax credits of \$5.00/acre in unzoned townships, and \$10/acre in zoned townships. I intend to send out a mailing very soon to inform those with current agreements of this new opportunity.

Tree Sale

We have sold out of everything except Norway Pine. If we do not sell out before the day of the sale we will sell them during the sale.

When it is all said and done we will have put another 32,050 trees on the Barron County landscape.

SWCD

The 2011 Conservation Program sign-up concluded April 1 and staff completed 54 applications, which are tracked in GIS. Agreements are being developed and field-work will soon begin.

Mark Netterlund, Land Information

The County Surveyor has worked on restoring 10 government corners (section and quarter corners) on County Forest

Land in the Town of Cedar Lake and getting the location of government corners in the Town of Prairie Lake using GPS technology. The government corners in the Town of Cedar Lake were originally set by government surveyors in 1854. Restoration work on these corners was needed because no current record was on file for these corners. A field search for monuments and other evidence is done, checking distances to other corners, recording the location of corner using GPS technology, setting a monument if need be and putting a current record of corner on file in the County Surveyor records is done. Most of the corners that were located using GPS technology in the Town of Prairie Lake were ¼ to ½ of a mile from a road so I spent a lot of quality time this winter on a pair of snow shoes.

Rhonda Sukys, Land Information

Rhonda has begun working with municipalities on redistricting divisions, created transportation maps for Office on Aging and updated and supplied the necessary data to the plat book vendor.

Human Resources

Rachael Richie, HR Director



New/Replacement Positions

Position Title	Office/Department	Incumbent	Date Filled	New/Replacement
Parks Caretaker – Southworth Park	Maintenance	Ron Amundson	4/30/11	Replacement
Behavioral Health/Adult Protective Services Case Manager	HHS	Kristin Scheel	4/11/11	Replacement
PT Civilian Correction Officer	Sheriff	Rob Drew	3/11/11	Replacement
PT Civilian Communication Officer	Sheriff	Tasha Draves	3/14/11	Replacement

Currently recruiting for the following positions:

- Secretary 1 - Register of Deeds
- Chief Deputy - Register of Deeds
- Child Support Specialist - Child Support
- PT Civilian Corrections Officer - Sheriff

Treasurer

Vonnie Ritchie, Treasurer

Camping Reservations

We began taking reservations for camping at the Barron County Parks on April 1, 2011. We have 69 sites reserved at Waldo Carlson Park, 33 sites reserved at Southworth Park, and 15 sites reserved at Veterans Park thus far. Many returning campers are anxious to reserve their favorite spot at our parks.

Tax Deed

The Tax Deed process on properties with delinquent 2007 tax has begun. The final day to pay the 2007 tax and stop this process is April 29, 2011. The list is on the County website although some parcels have been paid. After this deadline there is a 30 day period that allows the owners to repurchase their property by paying all taxes including interest, penalty, and tax deed fees.

Veterans Service Office

Scott Bachowski , Veterans Service Officer

Frank Buckles was buried last month with the pomp and ceremony befitting the man who outlived 4.7 million other Americans who served in World War I. His flag-draped casket was carried to his gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery on a caisson led by seven horses. A seven-man firing party fired three rifle volleys and a bugler played "Taps" as hundreds of onlookers saluted or held their hands to their hearts. At the end of the graveside service, soldiers from the Army's vaunted "Old Guard" folded the flag as an Army band played "America the Beautiful." Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Chiarelli presented it to Buckles' daughter, Susannah Flanagan. "To our comrade in arms, Frank Woodruff Buckles, our nation bestows military honors," said Lt. Col. Keith N. Croom, an Army chaplain. "In life, he honored the flag. Now, the flag honors him." Buckles lied about his age to enlist at 16. He died last month at his Charles Town, W.Va., home, at age 110. Before the burial, his body lay in honor inside Arlington's Memorial Amphitheater Chapel, guarded by an Old Guard soldier in full dress uniform. The story of Mr. Buckles is quite amazing; if you have the time and interest, look up his story.

We have planned our trip to the Veterans Home in King, Wisconsin on April 26, 2011. We are working with the "Add Life" program managers in the Office on Aging to assist with this trip. The trip to King is an effort to show Barron County residents interested in going to King someday what the facility has to offer them. The mission of the home is to provide an outstanding living experience for military veterans and eligible dependents that have rendered unique service to their country, state, and fellow citizens. To be eligible to live at the Veterans Home, a veteran must have entered service from the state of Wisconsin, or must have resided in the state for 12 consecutive months since his/her discharge from the service. A spouse of a veteran can also reside at King, provided they are admitted with their spouse or under other special circumstances. Veterans must also have served at least one qualifying term of service. King has been very helpful to work with and will be providing lunch for all participants.

The Moving Wall will be in Northwestern Wisconsin this summer. This year, Washburn County will host the Wall. The Wall will be set-up at the Wisconsin Northern Veterans Memorial Cemetery. The dates are July 28th through the 31st. "The Moving Wall" is a half-size replica of the Washington, DC Vietnam Veterans Memorial and has been touring the country for more than twenty years.

The Veterans Capitol Rally scheduled for April 13th has been postponed until further notice. The WDVA is planning to reschedule the event for late spring. The Rally, when rescheduled, will allow for Veteran advocates to meet with state legislators regarding Veterans issues.

The Army has announced a clarification in its guidelines for receiving a Purple Heart, with an emphasis on battlefield concussions being eligible for the medal. Official Army guidelines have long considered combat-sustained concussions a valid injury worthy of the Purple Heart, but in practice, it has been left to doctors or battlefield commanders to decide whether a blow to the head during combat warranted the medal. With recent studies on brain trauma, however, the rules have been revised to state what constitutes a concussion, with symptoms including momentary loss of consciousness or memory, dizziness, headache, nausea or light sensitivity. Medical treatment, also required for the medal, is defined by the rules to include merely rest and Tylenol. If you are a Soldier who suffered a concussion and feel you may not have been appropriately recognized for a Purple Heart, the Army urges you to re-apply through your chain of command.

Finance

Jodi Busch
Lead Fiscal Coordinator

We are continuing to prepare for our annual audits in the Finance Department. We plan for the Highway audit to take place the last week of April. The main audit is planned for about June 1st. We will be sending out information for

the single audit to the departments soon. A big thank you to all departments for their cooperation and timeliness in submitting Fixed Asset information. It has greatly helped us out here as we prepare the financials.

Happy Spring!



Highway Department

Mark Servi, Commissioner

Hopefully we have seen the last of the snow. The last storm of March 23rd proved to be one of the biggest of the season. We had every available member of the crew plowing, including most of the mechanics and shop staff. I cannot say enough about how everyone works together to get the job done. The cost of this storm and cleanup was over \$100,000. The cost of storm and associated cleanup so far this year on the county system is over \$510,000. The crew works very hard to keep the roads in decent winter driving shape.

We are now moving into spring maintenance activities such as shoulder grading, pot hole filling and crack filling. Maintenance preserves the road system, and helps insure that we get the best value out of the investment made in our highway system.

Early reconstruction projects on the county system are as follows:

CTH SS will be repaved from the intersection with CTH D on the north end of Chetek to the railroad tracks on the south end of

Chetek. We will also be repaving CTH D from the intersection with CTH SS north to the bridge over Prairie Lake. The existing asphalt surface will be milled. There are several areas where there will be minor grade adjustments made to improve drainage. Several existing concrete islands will be removed to improve snow removal. New asphalt surface will be placed and the road will be striped with epoxy pavement marking. The City of Chetek is participating in the cost of this project.

CTH D will be reconstructed from Polk County to CTH K. The existing surface will be milled and pulverized. The road will be repaved with asphalt, new shoulders placed and pavement marking installed.

We have begun to see the inflow of work from the towns, cities and other local government agencies. It is important to note that the external work that we do for these entities helps balance out the work for our crew that is needed for winter maintenance. Without this work the department would be looking for additional county funding to preserve the resource we need to provide for winter maintenance.

The Department has begun work on a new 5 year road plan. The Highway Committee has provided the parameters which will be used to begin the planning. The goal will be to lay out the funding needs and options for several different scenarios. When complete, this should provide a roadmap to addressing the future needs of the highway system.

The Highway Commissioner, Marv Thompson and Terry Henck attended the recent TDA Fly-In to Washington D.C. The Fly-In focused on federal transportation funding. We attended general session meetings, congressional briefings and also meet with members of our congressional delegation at their offices. The goal of this Fly-In is to stress the importance of the federal funding component to the transportation system in Wisconsin.

As we enter into the season of construction and maintenance, please continue to be aware that our crew is out working and that their safety is paramount. Drive without distractions, especially when you are in a work zone.

Health & Human Services

Judy Demers, Director

In Calendar Year 2010, 13,674 individuals received Medicaid and Foodshare benefits through our Income Maintenance Unit. A total of \$56,345,026 in Medicaid benefits were expended and \$7,953,795 in Foodshare benefits were issued.

WCHSA(Wisconsin Counties Human Services Association) has issued a counter-proposal to the state's budget proposal to centralize Income Maintenance functions. The hybrid model that is being proposed incorporates state, county and private staff into a County/State- administered service delivery system covering a statewide caseload of Foodshare and Medicaid cases. The proposal breaks down county lines whereby there will be regionaliza-

tion of some services, staff from any county can process cases from any other county in the state, and there will be opportunity for consumers to have face-to-face contact if they so desire. If there is agreement to move this model forward, workgroups will be established to address the various subsystems of the proposed system.

Public Health is on the alert for the potential of a measles outbreak. They have been working closely with local medical providers to ensure that immunizations are administered to those who need it. There have been 15 cases confirmed in the Twin Cities area. None have been confirmed in Barron County.

Aging / Aging & Disability Resource Center

Charlene Oftedahl, Director

The annual **Volunteer Recognition Dinner** will be Thursday, April 28, at St. Joseph school in Rice Lake. A dinner will be served at 5 pm with R-Country Gals entertaining. County Board Supervisors are welcome to join us in honoring volunteers who deliver meals-on-wheels, give rides to medical appointments, run errands for homebound persons, assist with homestead tax filing, read for persons with visual impairments, work at congregate meal sites and Day-break adult day care.....and the list goes on. These caring individuals make a huge difference in the lives of older and disabled persons, and provide a significant cost savings for Barron County's aging programs. Call Terri Mikyska at 537-6227 to make meal reservation if you wish to attend this event.

The annual **50-Plus Challenge to Living Well** is being held on Sunday, April 17, at the Cedar Mall in Rice Lake from noon to 3 p.m. Ever growing in popularity, last year over 300 persons attended this free event which is co-sponsored by the ADRC, UW-Barron County Campus, Marshfield Clinic, Lakeview Medical Center, Security Health Plan, Brentwood, and the Senior Review. It consists of free health screenings, health informational booths, entertainment by John Pisa & Friends, and guest speaker Dr. Lawrence Carlson.

Speak Up And Be Heard! The Wisconsin Elders Act (s46.82) and the federal Older Americans Act give County Aging Units the responsibility of advocating on behalf of older individuals and assisting them in expressing their views to elected officials and providers of services. Local graduates of the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups's (CWAG) Senior Statesman Program are volunteering their time to help people personally contact their legislators.

State Budget Proposals include significant changes for Family Care (long term care program for elderly and disabled) and Senior-Care (prescription drug program), but have left untouched the Elderly Nutrition Program, the Alzheimer's Family Caregiver Support Program, the Elderly Benefit Specialist Program, and the Specialized Transportation Program for Elderly and Disabled Persons. While these programs have been spared from proposed budget cuts, there are no proposals for funding increases to account for growing needs. The current Benefit Specialist Program will not be able to help many of the 1,600 Barron County residents on Senior-Care who may be required to also enroll in one of 25 Medicare Part D plans. If Family Care enrollment is capped as proposed, we will again have a waiting list of elderly and disabled persons in jeopardy of institutionalization.

Administration

Jeff French, Administrator

LCC/Extension, March 7th meeting:

Held public hearing for 2011 Land and Water Resource Management Plan on March 28th.

Approved new financial assurance for NR135 non-metallic mining from \$1,200 to \$3,000 per acre as of 1-1-12, with this amount to be evaluated every five years.

Silver Lake Management Plan has been completed and is awaiting DNR approval.

Property Committee, March 11th meeting:

Reviewed upgrades by Century link to enhanced 911 systems with a net cost of \$152,000 after grants of \$26,880. These dollars were budgeted in the Capital Improvement Capital Outlay Plan for 2011.

Directed staff to obtain appraisal of County owned property adjacent to Rice Lake Weighing for potential sale of land to R.L. Weighing.

Approved hiring of S.E.H. to conduct Storm water analysis for the purpose of reducing the annual Storm water assessment of the Campus property by the City of Rice Lake.

Approved expanding current size of the Property Committee from five members to seven with composition to include representatives from Highway, Zoning, Solid Waste, Executive, Campus, Museum, Parks/Forestry.

Directed Administrator to work with interested individuals in the Cumberland area for the purpose of moving the shooting range from the County owned pit to another location.

Directed Administrator, Corporation Counsel and Dam Coordinator to develop a plan of action for a per parcel assessment of property owners which are not in a lake district. This analysis will also be compared to a mill rate increase.

Allowed stipulation agreement which requires trailer removal and

fencing repair costs to be responsibility of the trailer park owner for encroachments on Rud property, located to the east of the Highway Shop.

Executive:

March 2nd:

Allowed a change in policy for employees on Federal Grand Jury, (Madison), that grants four hours of travel time pay on either the day before or day after.

March 24th:

Authorized Administrator to seek outside legal counsel for help in developing new Employee Policies as a result of the Budget Repair Bill and requirement to have new policies in place by July 1st, cost not to exceed \$10,000.

Discussed Frac Sand Mining and Processing plants and directed Administrator to contact companies and to report back to Executive. Also requested that Administrator contact Wisconsin Counties Association to determine what other information can be obtained.

Administrator informed Committee of \$102,276 Workers Comp dividend.

April 6th:

Approved a flat fee of \$350 for area funeral homes for the transportation of a body for an autopsy to either Sacred Heart in Eau Claire or Midwest Forensic Medical Examiner's office in Anoka County.

Approved Administrator's appointment for a Workgroup to develop Employment policies, consisting of County Board Chair Miller, Ken Mosentine, Donna Cordes, Corporation Counsel, H.R. Director, Lead Fiscal Coordinator and Administrator.

Discussed changes to I-94 Coalition as a result of other municipalities wanting to join. Directed Administrator to bring back resolution for May meeting.

Resolution to close 2010 Books of Account will be brought forward at the May Executive and County Board meetings, respectively.