



BARRON COUNTY DEPARTMENT UPDATES

November / December 2010

Veterans Service Office

Scott Bachowski Veterans Service Officer

Our Outreach efforts continue to be very successful; since June 2009 we served 314 new Barron County Veterans! This is an amazing number considering previous years we only averaged about 45 new veterans. Thank you to every employee in the county and the county board for helping us find these veterans that deserve their benefits!

The Veterans Day program at the Northern Veterans Memorial Cemetery was once again a magnificent ceremony. We had several Barron County Veterans participate in this year's program to include the guest speaker; Lt. Shawn Gilbert of Rice Lake. Also participating were Victor French who presented the Army flag, Steven Bloomquist who presented the Air Force flag and Pastor Redfield who offered the invocation and benediction.

A recent letter to a local Wisconsin newspaper talked about the "new" Aid and Attendance benefit for veterans and their spouses. The

letter described strict income eligibility requirements and complex paperwork. It also cited a \$650 non-refundable "fee" to apply for the benefit. Unfortunately, it sounds like the individual writing the letter may have fallen victim to an unscrupulous business looking to collect fees. Some businesses get involved in promoting "new" veterans benefits so they can charge fees to help applicants manipulate the family's financial assets in order to meet eligibility requirements for veterans' benefits. These benefits, like the Aid and Attendance benefit cited in the letter, are not usually new at all. Veterans and their family members need to know: Filing for veteran's benefits is a free process and the experts at the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Claims Office and County Veterans Service Offices (CVSOs) are ready to help. Navigating the paperwork and understanding sometimes complex eligibility requirements can take time and require patience. While individuals are free to decide for themselves whether to hire a consultant, people should understand that ap-

plication fees, or money paid up front, is never required to access a veterans benefit. They should also be aware that the individual representing veterans before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) must meet federal legal requirements. The best advice we can offer is:

- Remember filing is a free process. You can apply on your own with free help from WDVA, a CVSO, or other free advocates, such as those provided by veterans service organizations.
- Do your homework and ask questions. If your consultant is more interested in your personal finances or asking for a fee, you should be concerned. Ask how and when the individual was certified for filing claims.

Be patient and understand that the application process can sometimes be complex and time consuming. Know that the WDVA Claims Office or your CVSO are ready to answer your questions and serve as your guide throughout the process.



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Health & Human Services

Judy Demers, Director

Economic Support Services Program Manager, Jamie Christianson-Fawcett, has resigned her position. She has accepted a position as Area Administrator with the Western Regional Office in Eau Claire. The plan is to appoint Lead Worker, Marie Berger, as interim program manager.

The State performed a CSP (Community Support Program) site visit on October 28. There were no significant findings as a result of the review. Barron County was granted a one-year provisional certification as a single-county CSP. Our CSP certification was previously held jointly with Washburn County.

Planning for the merger of Adult Protection Services and Behavioral Health Services is underway. Discussions are being held as to division of duties and how to best design a system that is responsive to consumer needs and maximizes the expertise of staff from both units.

Two Public Health nurses are being oriented to provide nursing services to the CSP. This service has been provided through a contract with an outside agency until now. Providing nursing services through Public Health will facilitate better coordination of services within the DHHS and will save dollars as well. Public Health nurses will assume these duties fully on January 1, 2011.

Barron County has been awarded a Healthier Wisconsin Partnership grant in the amount of \$750,000 over the next five years. We are one of only 3 entities in the State of Wisconsin to be awarded a grant. The grant application was a collaborative effort on the part of many community partners spearheaded by a partnership between the Healthier Cumberland Coalition and the Barron County Safe and Stable Families' Coalition. The goal of the grant is to promote healthier lifestyles in Barron County and will build upon what has already been learned in the Healthier Cumberland initiative.

UW Extension

Tim Jergenson, Agriculture Agent

Mary Pardee, 4-H Youth Development Educator with Barron County's UW-Extension office, was awarded the 2010 Non-Formal Environmental Educator of the Year Award from the Wisconsin Association of Environmental Education (WAEЕ).

WAEЕ recognizes schools, youth groups, individual students, and educators for outstanding environmental efforts each year. The Non-Formal Environmental Educator award is presented for exhibiting innovative and exemplary effort in providing environmental education opportunities for general audiences. Pardee was nominated for the award

for her continued commitment to water education. Recently, she has partnered with the National Park Service on service-learning projects for youth, coordinated a hands-on watershed display at the Wisconsin Farm Technology Days, and serves as the project director for 4-H₂O Replenish, a statewide youth effort to learn about and practice water conservation. According to Tim Jergenson, Agriculture/Natural Resources/Horticulture Agent and Department Head of Barron County UW-Extension, "Mary Pardee's work with young people combines science and community service into healthy outdoor learning activities that will equip them with valuable life skills."





Register of Deeds

Joyce Kaseno, Register of Deeds

The Wisconsin Register of Deeds Association (WRDA) Fall Conference was held in Minocqua, WI, on October 6, 7 and 8, 2010.

There have not been a lot of changes recently. The two main topics of interest this conference were the State Vital Records Office (SVRO) update on the Statewide Vital Records Information System (SVRIS) implementation and information regarding the recording requirements for correction instruments.

The SVRO has been in the process of creating a software program that will allow all Local Vital Records Offices (LVRs) to access the state vital re-

ords and print the copies from their database. As with any system, they have encountered problems and they have changed the dates for implementation. They were anticipating implementation yet this Fall but have now moved it forward until Spring of 2011.

New legislation was enacted regarding correction documents. 2009 Wisconsin Act 348 was discussed at great length. The Affidavit of Correction was intended to be used for scrivener errors but was also used for other reasons and became controversial as to when it should be accepted for recording. Act 348 has set out specific requirements and a great discussion ensued on the topic.

Since the rate increase for recording documents we have been collecting fees for the redacting of social security numbers. This money is to be used for the project of redacting the numbers from documents available on the internet. As we import the back scanned documents into the Laredo program we find those that have social security numbers and check to see if they were automatically redacted or if we need to do it manually.

We have our 14th intern in the office. The scanning project continues to move forward with their help. 85 volumes have now been scanned and 14 have been indexed and are now available on the internet.



County Clerk

DeeAnn Cook, County Clerk

Turnout for the November Election was just a little less than we predicted. There were 15,978 votes cast in the county and in the comparable election, Nov. 2006, there were 16,653 votes cast. Results started coming in shortly after 8:30pm and were promptly posted to our website. The last results were reported to us at around 10:30pm. The election ran smoothly and the Board of Canvass only found a couple small addition errors which did not affect any final results. Several counties to our south had recounts in Assembly and Senate races. We are now busy re-

ording votes and statistical reports (GAB 190) into SVRS for the 25 relying municipalities. All voting activity and new registrations must be recorded in SVRS within 30 days.

Before we even conclude the November election, we will have to inherit and set up the April election so military write in ballots can get sent out and tracked in SVRS. The state wide offices up for election in the spring are the Justice of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals District III. In addition, there will be some races at the municipal level.

20 municipalities have signed and submitted a resolution allowing the

Humane Society to act as an agent for them to issue dog licenses when an animal gets adopted. 4 more municipalities have indicated that they will pass the resolution in December. This new process, which starts in 2011, is another cooperative effort between municipalities and county that will inevitably help with the goal to get more dogs licensed.

Our first month processing county board payroll using the new voucher system was very successful. There was significant time savings in processing realized. Anyone with questions or difficulties in using the new system is encouraged to contact Jennifer Horstman, Deputy County Clerk.



Economic Development

David Miller, Director

On November 9th, 2010, the Barron County Board of Supervisors voted on its budget for 2011. The budget, as it was presented during the November 9th meeting, excluded the Barron County Economic Development. Doing so, they eliminated economic development on the county level by removing the Economic Development Director. Their move did not stop there. Since the Director's position was a dual position of responsibility, they also removed the position of Executive Director for the Barron County Economic Development Corporation (BCEDC). These two positions were active for nearly seven years.

Over that time period, I have completed over 1,580 economic development projects that also included assisting and consulting with 435 business start-up businesses, 102 expansion projects, 104 bio-fuels and alternative energy projects, 84 local, regional and state-wide collaborations and as you can imagine, so many more projects for existing businesses, across all types from within the business communities across all of the county's municipalities.

Counseling was provided in guidance in marketing, business plans, financial packaging, location assistance, operations and more. I also was a founding member for the "Northwest Wisconsin Regional Inventors and Entrepreneurs Club", an initiative that stretched across five counties. In 2006, I received the State of Wisconsin's "Champion Innovation" award for the establishing the successful club. I also participated in seven local trade shows, four regional Tourism trade shows and one International, multi-industry/ Economic Development trade show. Other projects, but not inclusive to all activities, included:

Major Projects / Categories (To Date)	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Technical Assistance to Start-up Businesses	47	69	53	93	65	52	46
Technical Assistance - Expansions	10	17	25	26	9	11	6
Future Development (Bio-fuels, alternative energies, wood pellets, digesters, etc)	6	9	12	13	36	19	8
General Requests (Data, research, financial packaging)	8	14	27	53	116	94	54
Technical Assistance to Jurisdictions	4	16	13	6	4	5	9
Response to Site Search / Site Selection	3	10	10	11	5	13	11
State, Regional & Local Presentations	5	8	10	11	6	15	51
Regional Coalitions & Collaborations	17	15	14	15	12	11	NA
Education "How to Start a Business" Students taught on Ashland, Hayward and Rice Lake WITC Campuses	16	9	7	45	40	29	NA

In addition, as an element of fulfilling the 501c(3) Educational Charity responsibilities of the BCEDC, the elimination has also caused the discontinuation of the evening Continuing Education course, "How to Start a Business", on the WITC campuses in Rice Lake, Ashland and Hayward. Over the past semesters, since 2005, 148 students learned the important and critical fundamentals offered in the course and unfortunately, there more folks than that now will go un-served in the future. Folks will need to contact WITC to see if an alternative becomes available in the years ahead.

I conducted two major Businesses Retention and Expansion Studies that covered over 200 of our businesses and jointly participated in two major Labor Market Studies, through the UW Extension office.

I led the efforts to create the "Governor's St. Croix Area Promotions Committee", a tourism collaboration, of over twenty agencies, municipalities, businesses and volunteers across four counties. It's website is: www.wistcroixarea.com. Thousands of you have visited the site as you have found it to be extremely informative and pleasing to use.

I have also had the pleasure of sitting on the Northwest ITBEC Tourism Committee since 2005. This was the first cohesive tourism effort on the county level and it has been an extreme benefit to the county and its tourism. Up until the economy took a spin, the county saw an annual increase of millions of dollars in tourism expenditures over a six year period. Even in 2009, when expenditures were down all over the state, those counties that were members of ITBEC collaborations, showed the least amount of decrease than counties that do not participate in such collaborations. You can see the results of advertising, marketing and promotions of the county that I participated and assisted in, over the last six years, including 4 Discover Wisconsin videos, collaterals, trade shows, an estimated one million dollars increase in tourism expenditures each year since 2005, and more, located on the NW ITBEC website: <http://www.northwestwisconsin.com/>

In 2010, July, those of us in the NW WI Economic Development Region decided we were going to band together and create a collaboration similar to the others that have been created in the state. After two planning meetings, the first official meeting of the "Great Northwest Wisconsin Economic Development Collaboration" was held on November 3rd. It was a pleasure to be the point person for this entity as those among the "magnificent nine" counties came together.

I also led the reorganization from provider based to content management based operation of the county's official Economic Development website: www.barroncounty.com

Between 2004 and 2010, using the county revolving loan fund and the Regional Loan Fund, I assisted with businesses in completing their applications for business loans which allowed and planned for over 1,250 jobs in the seven years; over \$8.2 million in loan funds and over 18 million in total project costs. Don't let that be misleading. I did not say I "created the jobs". Professionals in my industry touch a lot of projects that may create a lot of jobs, but only businesses can create jobs. Those who don't own businesses do not create jobs and that includes politicians, on any level. Some of these numbers may be familiar, as they all have been available for everyone to see within our own county government informational paths, since 2005, as they have been published at times when the numbers showed an increase from previous issues in the monthly "Department Updates". After all, that's why all the Department Heads submitted the information. All anyone needed to do was take the time and read the reports; and as a second information path, for everyone else, the information was also published monthly since 2005 in the "Barron County Economic Development Newsletter".

Advertising, marketing and promotions of the county has always been important to me. Too important to rely on others to do it. That's why I spent my personal time, creating all the national and international institutional advertising for magazines; the monthly Newsletters; all of the trade show collaterals and the redesign and structure of the economic development website. Again, it was cost effective as well. It was always a pleasure to conduct these activities as it kept costs down. In addition, I also created over 100 PowerPoint programs for as many and more presentations about the county, used in trade show, regional and statewide conference(s) venue. Those that do the same, know how satisfying these activities can be.

Special thanks are needed to many of you. Hundreds of you. You know who you are so please know that I am grateful for your immense support over the years.

Good bye to all. Thanks for your support. Good luck in the coming year.

David Miller

What's Coming for Economic Development?

Effective January, 2011, there will be two individuals that will try and assist in the economic development needs through the Barron County Economic Development Corporation (BCEDC). The BCEDC Board is meeting on December 1st, to finalize its actions. Contact the BCEDC (800-529-4148) for more information, as the deadline for this Newsletter article was November 30th.

The intent is to staff the office a couple of hours a day and up to three to five days a week. For convenience sake, the BCEDC's office is now located in room 2311 in the Government Center (old Courthouse) in the city of Barron. Room 2311 is on the second floor. Since the staff will work around their own schedules, it would be of benefit to clients to call first, leave a message if needed, but most importantly set up a meeting date and time.





ADRC / Office on Aging

Charlene Oftedahl, Director

In 1974 Older American's Act programs first became available to older citizens in Barron County. It started with the Elderly Nutrition Program, now called Senior Dining, followed by meals-on-wheels, transportation services, an equipment loan closet, adult day care (Daybreak) and other supportive programs to provide education and respite for family caregivers, especially those dealing with Alzheimer's Disease. Recently household chore services and personal care were added to the list of services aimed at providing "a little help when needed" to older persons who do not need a great deal of help, and who do not qualify for income/asset

based assistance. The services are not free. People are informed of the full cost and a suggested donation. These contributions, as well as fund-raisers, donations from community organizations, and matching funds from Barron County, allow us to stretch the federal/state allocations further to provide a little help to more people and avoid waiting lists. A mutual goal is to delay or prevent the need for more costly, publicly funded services by encouraging people to take preventative measures to maintain their health and to avoid burnout of family caregivers.

The Older Americans Act (OAA) is due for reauthorization in 2011. The programs funded by OAA save tax

dollars by keeping older adults healthy and in their own homes. Yet, funding for these programs has been stagnant for years. Funding is at least 12% less than needed to make up for eight years of funding shortfalls, to keep pace with inflation, and to address the rise in the senior population. Spending money on OAA programs saves in the long run, because it cuts Medicaid and Medicare expenditures by reducing premature nursing home placements, averting malnutrition and controlling chronic health conditions. You can help by letting our new legislators know what these programs mean to your older family members and neighbors.



Treasurer's Office

Vonnie Ritchie, Treasurer

The 2010 Real Estate Tax bills will be calculated in the next few weeks. The Annual Municipal Treasurer's Training will be held on December 8, 2010. After the tax bills are calculated and certified by the municipal clerks, we will prepare the data for updating the municipal tax collection programs.

We are also getting ready to start the In-rem tax foreclosure process on the 2007 delinquent taxes. There are approximately 148 parcels totaling \$140,669 plus interest and penalty. The owners and mortgage holders

will be notified by certified mail when the documents are filed with the court in January. The list will also be published in all the county newspapers and posted on our website. Last year the 2006 delinquent parcel count was 201 totaling \$212,550.

Our Annual Tax Foreclosed Property Sale was held on Monday, November 29, 2010, at the Justice Center. The following parcels were sold:

TOWN OF ALMENA

1575 2-2 1/2 ST, TURTLE LAKE S16-T34N-R14W S17-T34N-R14W

002-1700-03-000 PRT OF NE-NE & SE-NE SEC 17 & OF GOVT LOT 4 SEC 16 SHOWN AS LOT 3 CSM 36/167

002-1700-03-010 PRT OF SE-NE SEC 17 & OF GOVT LOT 3 SEC 16 SHOWN AS LOT 1 CSM 36/167
002-1700-03-020 PRT OF NE-NE & SE-NE SEC 17 & OF GOVT LOTS 3&4 SEC 16 SHOWN AS LOT 2 CSM 36/167
002-1700-03-030 PRT OF NE-NE SEC 17 & OF GOVT LOT 4 SEC 16 SHOWN AS LOT 4 CSM 36/167

The purchase price was \$155,000 for all four parcels.

Two other parcels were sold at the Treasurer's Office after the auction. A list of all other Barron County Property available for sale can be found on the Barron County website.

Administration

Jeff French, Administrator

LCC/Extension:

- Discussed Farm Technology Days training session in Plover on December 3rd.
- Did not support an additional \$5,000 in 2011 budget to help with Chetek Lake Study.
- Reviewed information from Chad Alberg regarding AHIPS report for Wildlife Damage and approved 2011 Wildlife Damage Budget. Note, approved budget is substantially similar to the County approved 2011 budget.
- Reviewed and approved plan as prepared by Soil & Water Conservationist for Rice Lake gully whereby effected residents would pay their proportionate cost-share as outlined in the grant agreements.
- Approved staff recommended Snap Bean Letter. This document requests that care be exercised when planting snap beans on highly erodible land.

Property Committee:

- Referred to staff; research into potential of adding third Courtroom at Justice Center. At this time it is staff's intention to begin this process with Market & Johnson who were the General Contractors when the building was constructed. All information gathered will be taken back to this Committee for their review and approval.
- Heard comments from the public on Waldo Carlson Boat Launch Fee but, reconsideration of fee died for lack of a second.
- Did not support an additional \$5,000 in 2011 budget to help with Chetek Lake Study.

- Determined that relationship with School District of Rice Lake as it pertains to their usage of the Anne Street School is appropriate with no changes recommended.
- Reviewed roof replacements at UWBC and recommended no changes to the 2011 Campus budget.
- Rescinded original Prairie Grass design for Justice Center thereby allowing mowing to continue.
- Determined no action was needed for junk left are rifle ranges as this is covered by County Ordinance.

Staff Reports/Updates: (Information Only):

- Boat Landing Repairs – Big Sand Lake: Compliment from citizen for repairs done to boat landing.
- Wolf Control Advisory Referendum: Staff recommended no action at this time and until more information can be gathered from DNR and other regulatory agencies.
- WITC Addition: Reviewed information received from WITC on 18,000 Sq. Ft. addition to their facilities.
- Timber Sale Bid Results: The three bids let this spring have been favorable.
- Office Complex – Lease Work Force Resource: This project has been completed and Workforce Resource is now leasing the Office Complex in cooperation with other local governmental and non-profit agencies.
- Closing of Parks: Discussed – no formal action taken.
- Update on Waldo Carlson Upgrades: Staff provided information on how upgrades are progressing, sidewalks to be installed next spring.
- Changes to Fair Building Use Agreement: Staff has completed agreement and expects final signatures in early December.

Executive:

November 18th:

- Reviewed Benchmarking for Sheriff's Department.
- Approved Aging/ADRC staff to purchase vehicle from this year's State appropriation.
- Approved Employee comprehensive travel policy.
- Allowed the creation of a Full-Time Floater/Child Support Clerical position which is the combining of the two open clerical positions in Child Support and is budget neutral for the 2011 budget.
- Discussed 2012 budget; budget concepts and how process could potentially be effected because of State and Federal funding shortfalls.

November 3rd:

- Allowed the creation of a third part-time on-call dispatch position. Currently there are two part-time on-call dispatch positions authorized and at certain times neither of these individuals is available the creation of a third position will ensure that adequate coverage is maintained and costs will be budget neutral.
- Authorized a policy whereby non-union personnel are allowed to sell up to 40 hours of unused vacation into their 457(B) retirement plan. The only cost to the County for this benefit is Social Security and Medicare taxes.
- Most of the other items on this agenda were taken to the entire County Board for approval at the November 9th meeting.



Have a Safe & Happy Holiday Season!

