

Department Updates



Barron County, Wisconsin

Veterans Service Office

Scott Bachowski, Veteran Service Officer

We are into one of the busiest times of year for the Veterans Service Office. We are processing renewal applications for VA Health Care Benefits and Eligibility Verification Reports (EVR). Each year certain veterans are required to complete a "Means Test" in order to continue with their VA Health Care. Eligibility for VA health care is dependent upon a number of variables, which may influence the final determination of the services for which you qualify to include income levels. We are also completing many Eligibility Verification Reports. Law and regulations require that as such a condition of continuing VA Pension, each person in receipt of pension must provide such information as necessary to determine their annual income and net worth, as well as for their dependents, as applicable. This basically means that each claimant is sent an EVR each year, generally at the end of the calendar year. These reports must be completed and sent to the VA Regional Office in Milwaukee no later than 1 March of each year.

Earlier this month, Governor Walker announced Wisconsin Working, an effort that puts a heavy emphasis on finding jobs for unemployed veterans. Veterans have been hit particularly hard by the economic downturn, with an unemployment rate in Wisconsin between 13 and 15 percent, significantly higher than the nationwide average.

Under the first phase of Wisconsin Working, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) and the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) are implementing additional initiatives to connect unemployed workers with jobs, including:

- Hosting at least 14 career fairs statewide that target unemployed veterans and potential employers.
- Hosting online job fairs to increase access for veterans seeking employment.
- Partnering with the Department of Military Affairs to organize an employer educational seminar to inform employers of the benefits of hiring veterans.



Let's work together to help connect veterans to jobs. I urge you to share this information with veterans and others in the veterans' community so we can get veterans employed. I will update the dates and places as they become available. I also maintain an extensive listing of available local jobs in the Veterans Service Office.

Dawn and I will be attending the Wisconsin County Veterans Service Officer Association training and business conference in Danbury, WI. We will be out of the office from May 7th through 11th.

County Clerk

DeeAnn Cook, County Clerk

The candidates are set for the April 3, 2012 Spring Election. There is at least one candidate in every County Board Supervisory District and two in several. In District #17, there are three candidates filed so a Primary on February 21, 2012 is necessary to narrow the field. The top two vote getters will move on to the April Spring Election. Wisconsin's Presidential Preference vote will be at the April Election this year instead of February like it had been in the past.

Redistricting has created numerous new challenges in the Statewide Voter System. The process of putting voter records into their proper place was somewhat automated by GAB using GIS data. Unfortunately, their system didn't seem to like our address system with all of the fractions in the addresses so there is a lot of work necessary to clean things up. Rhonda Sukys, Land Information Officer, has been immensely helpful in the process.

We hired Jessica Hodek for the Deputy County Clerk position. She comes highly recommended and possesses the skill set we were looking for and is doing a fine job thus far.



Health & Human Services

Judy Demers, Director

Notification has been received that Barron County has been awarded a \$10,000 grant for Public Health to develop and implement a quality improvement plan, take steps to measure performance and to begin the process to move toward voluntary national accreditation. One of the objectives of Healthiest Wisconsin- 2020, the State Health Plan, identifies a focus that addresses public health capacity and quality, and that Wisconsin health departments will be accredited using an established standard by 2020. This grant will assist us

in moving toward that end. The funding is available from January 1, 2012 through September 29, 2012.

Our new Public Health Program Manager/ Health Officer is Kelli Engen. She will assume her role effective January 30. She has had experience in Buffalo County Public Health and also in working with the Ho-Chunk Tribal Health Services.

Karla Broten has been appointed as the new Youth and Families Services Program Manager. Karla has been with DHHS for a

period of 10 years and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position.

The Income Maintenance Call/Change Center began operation on January 3. During the first week, 2351 calls were received through the Call Center. The percentage of calls answered improves daily, having achieved 100% on Wednesday, 1/11. Our Income Maintenance staff have done a phenomenal job in meeting the challenges of this new system and have done so with a positive outlook and a 'can-do' attitude.

Finance

Jodi Busch Lead Fiscal Coordinator

January was a busy month in the Barron County Finance Department. However, despite the busy pace, staff was able to get the W-2's and 1099's completed before

their required due dates. 2011 remains open for revenues until Friday, February 17th and expenditure vouchers until Tuesday, February 15th. We are preparing for a February Worker's Compensation audit, completing year end reporting in several areas, and compiling 2011 preliminary

data to prepare for upcoming audits. After the 2011 receipt and expenditure deadlines, it's full steam ahead balancing out the year, preparing audit workpapers, as well as compiling the fixed asset information. I anticipate a very busy Spring in Finance.

Forestry

John Cisek, County Forester

Despite the warm weather, timber harvest operations have begun in the Towns of Doyle (29th St. sale), Maple Plain (Red Head Lake) and Vance Creek (Turtle Cr.). The sales involve a combination of selection harvests in oak and northern hardwood and aspen regeneration. The combined

volume of the sales will be an estimated 610 MBF (thousand board feet) and 3490 cords of pulpwood. Estimated value generated will be \$ 288,050.90 There is adequate frost in the ground in most areas, harvest operations should not be impacted.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has awarded Barron County a

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant toward the purchase of the Morris Wisti property in Sumner Township. The addition of the 240 acre parcel to the Barron County Forest will provide access for recreation and hunting and provide future income to Barron County in the form of revenue generated by the sale of wood products.

Office on Aging / Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

Charlene Oftedahl, Director

"Friday Facts....Caregiver Chats" are meetings for family caregivers facilitated by Gloria Vaughn on the third Friday of every month at the Government Center. Gloria has lined up speakers on a variety of topics, and offers the option for caregivers to stay for discussion afterwards.

Volunteers, trained by AARP and the Inter-

nal Revenue Service, are scheduled at local senior centers to assist with filing taxes. Low income seniors will receive less Homestead Tax Credit than expected due to last year's vote of the Wisconsin legislature to stop adjusting the credit for inflation.

We are waiting to see what the Wisconsin legislature does in response to the demand by the federal agency CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) to lift the

enrollment cap on Family Care which went into effect on July 1, 2011. Currently there are 110 persons on the waiting list maintained by the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Barron, Rusk, and Washburn Counties. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services is seeking public opinion on initiatives designed to keep the state's long term care programs sustainable. You may read the proposals and give your input at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lcreform

Highway Department

Mark Servi, Highway Commissioner

You may be wondering if winter is ever going to show up. We have not had a substantial snowfall event yet this winter. We still have had many winter events that seem to require a high level of effort and material, as the pattern that has set upon us tends to produce more ice storms. However, this mild winter has provided the opportunity for the crew to work on brush and tree removal along the roads. It is important to keep the brush cut back, as it acts as a "snow fence" and catches snow, causing drifting over the road surface. We have been catching up with this brushing, as this is a good time to work in the right of way with little or no snow cover, and with the vegetation dormant. Little trees turn into big trees, which require more effort to remove.

The Highway Committee participated in a salt shed tour around the area. The tour included facilities in Dunn County, Chip-

pewa County, the City of Rice Lake and Busse's Custom Spraying. The Committee was able to look at different types of salt shed facilities and discuss the good and bad features with staff that operated the facilities. The Committee instructed the Highway Commissioner to develop a design-build specification that includes the features that the Committee determined to be needed no matter what the building type is. This document will be presented to the Highway Committee at the February 9th meeting. Once the Committee finalizes the design-build specification it will be sent out for bids.

The Highway Facility Site Grading plan is currently also under design. This Plan is needed to insure the elevation at which the Salt Shed is built on fits into the entire property drainage plan. We will use this plan to apply for the necessary grading permits from the DNR.

Work continues on the Road Agreements with the frac sand mine operators. We have been provided with the routes and truck loadings for each of the mines. This information is being used to develop the necessary improvements for each section of road based on this high impact truck loading. Drafting of the road agreements has begun, and will include the cost of the improvement based on the loadings that each mine provided. When the Highway Committee approves the agreements, negotiations will begin with each individual mine operator for the impact that they will have on our Highway System. The Committee has decided that these road agreements need to be in place prior to any hauling taking place, and also instructed the Highway Commissioner to utilize the Statutory Road Posting Authority to protect the Highway system from damage from hauling until such time that the Road Agreements are in effect.

Clerk of Court

Sharon Millermon, Clerk of Court

\$83,382.59 was received from the Clerk of Court Office for delinquent unpaid fines, fees and surcharges during 2011 through the interception of state tax refunds. Presently bill H.R. 1416 (House of Representatives) and S. 755 (U.S. Senate) are being considered allowing for the interception of

federal tax refunds for unpaid court debts. I have sent letters to encourage the passage to: Senator Ron Johnson, Senator Herb Kohl and Representative Sean Duffy. To date, Senator Kohl has joined in co-sponsoring the bill. The House of Representatives bill has been referred to the House Committee on Ways & Means and the U.S. Senate bill has been read twice and

referred to the Committee on Finance. The passage of these bills, in my opinion, would be a substantial financial benefit to the courts, counties and states, but obviously a significant negative consequence to the tax filers indebted to the courts.

Treasurer

Vonnie Ritchie, Treasurer

December Land Sales

Lots 13, 14, & 15 of Lloyd's South Park Heights in the City of Cumberland were sold on December 22, 2011. We also sold the lots at 1156 Washington Ave in the City of Cumberland on December 14, 2011 and 5 N Main St in the City of Rice Lake on December 29, 2011.

2011 Real Estate Taxes

The due date for the first installment of real estate and personal property taxes was January 31, 2012. We have been periodically uploading payments from the Municipal Treasurers' data base to our tax program. For the first time we calculated the January Settlement for the Municipal Treasurers because the State was late in getting the forms out. Early in February we will get the final payments from the municipal treasurers and then calculate the

February settlement amounts that are due to all the taxing districts (schools, state, county, municipalities, special districts & WITC). Our office will collect any unpaid 2011 real estate taxes starting on February 1st except for the City of Rice Lake. The City of Rice Lake collects all three of their payments through July 31, 2012, and their unpaid taxes are turned over to us in August. February is a very busy month for our office.

Human Resources

Rachael Richie, HR Director

<u>New/Replacement Positions</u>				
<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Office/Department</u>	<u>Incumbent</u>	<u>Date Filled</u>	<u>New/Replacement</u>
PT Civilian Correction Officer	Sheriff	Ryan O'Connell	12/28/11	Replacement
PT Civilian Correction Officer	Sheriff	Melissa Damrell	1/2/12	Replacement
Deputy County Clerk / County Board Secretary	County Clerk	Jess Hodek	1/3/12	Replacement
Clerk / Typist	Health & Human Services	Anne Andrea	1/6/12	Replacement
Clerk / Typist (PT)	Health & Human Services	Debra Healy	1/12/12	Replacement
PT Civilian Correction Officer	Sheriff	Kayla Peichel	1/14/12	Replacement
Public Health Program Manager	Health & Human Services	Kelli Engen	1/30/12	Replacement
Patrol Deputy	Sheriff	Recruiting		Replacement

- The on-line application submission process is now effective and interested candidates are able to apply online and attach their resume, cover letter, etc. A computer workstation is available in the Department of Administration for interested candidates to use to apply on-line.
- The 2011 OSHA Form 300A Summary of Work related illnesses/injuries have been completed and posted.
- A few minor edits to the personnel policies handbook were approved by Executive to include the following:
 - Deleted Section C/Overtime from page 3 and redistributed to page 5
 - Added “and shall be recorded to the nearest ¼ of an hour” to page 3/Time Not Worked/Paid Leave.
 - Added “may qualify” to 2nd sentence on page 5/Overtime/Exempt
 - Added “Comp time shall be tracked on the timesheet” to Page 5/Overtime/Exempt.
 - Added “earned at straight time or time and one half) to 1st sentence on page 5/Overtime/Accrual.
 - Added “Department heads shall determine employee eligibility for earning compensatory time to page 5/Overtime/Comp Time Off.
 - Added Jail Sergeant pay schedule to handbook.
 - Added “of up to 40 hours” to 2nd sentence on page 7/Vacation Accrual.
 - Added “upon hire to 1st sentence on page 10/Holiday/Eligibility.
 - Added “Communication Officers receive up to \$100/year for shirts” and reference to “steel toed shoes” for the highway on page 20/Clothing/Boot Allowance.
 - Moved Highway Seasonal section from page 35 to page 10.
 - Changed 3rd sentence on page 37/Workplace Protections/Workplace Safety to read, “The County shall pay the employee the difference between the disability check and employee’s normal net pay utilizing the employee’s paid leaves.” AND changed 2nd to last sentence to reflect....”whichever occurs last.”



Administration / Committee Updates

Jeff French, County Administrator

LCC/Extension:

January: Approved the following fee schedule for NR135 reclamation plans beginning January 1st 2012.

Acres:

Review Fee:

1 – 20	\$ 800
21 – 40	\$ 1,200
41 – 80	\$ 2,000
81 – 160	\$ 2,800
161 – 240	\$ 3,600
240+	\$ 4,400

Note, this is **not** the fee schedule for the assurance bond.

Property Committee:

January: Approved annual Forestry Work Plan this will also be approved by the Full Board at the February meeting. The approval of the Forestry Work Plan is necessary so as to provide grant funding from the State for the County Forester Position.

Net County cost to upgrade the 911 system was \$148,793 which is under budget.

By consensus agreed to leave existing weapons signs at Government Center unchanged.

Executive:

December:

Discussed, but took no formal action, on using Wipfli Consulting services to help with financing and cost analysis for Highway Facility Site Plan.

Allowed use of funds from vending machine revenue to purchase treadmills for wellness room in the old jail. This was also discussed and approved by the Property Committee at the January meeting.

January:

Approved out of state travel for Mark Servi, Walt Organ and Marv Thompson to attend Highway conference in Washington, DC.

Approved WRS withholding from elected officials, in accordance with Act 32.

Other action items were referred to the full Board for consideration at the January meeting.

Register of Deeds

Joyce Kaseno, Register of Deeds

Following are the ROD Income/Expense Comparisons for 1999 through 2011.

Year	Account Totals Revenue	ROD Expenses
1999	570,769.00	177,642.00
2000	596,193.00	191,026.00
2001	677,364.00	192,581.00
2002	814,588.00	198,161.00
2003	946,157.00	196,797.00
2004	872,913.00	196,125.00
2005	933,783.00	199,422.00
2006	901,513.00	192,516.00
2007	797,924.00	202,003.00
2008	655,922.00	202,330.00
2009	701,761.00	223,825.00
2010	680,436.00	248,560.00
2011	706,533.00	154,734.00
2012	-	
	9,855,856.00	2,575,722.00

Year	County Land Info	Public Access
	46135	46140
1999	53,720.00	
2000	47,640.00	
2001	56,868.00	5,097.00
2002	65,912.00	16,478.00
2003	79,416.00	19,856.00
2004	61,100.00	15,275.00
2005	55,664.00	13,916.00
2006	51,236.00	12,809.00
2007	46,596.00	11,649.00
2008	42,672.00	10,668.00
2009	45,432.00	11,358.00
2010	49,678.00	15,069.00
2011	57,198.00	19,066.00
2012		
	713,132.00	151,241.00

Land Info 864,373.00

State	5,255,853.00
County	3,735,630.00
Land Info	-

TOTAL 8,991,483.00

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Register of Deeds (Continued)

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Year	State 80% Transfer	State Land Info	State UCC	State CC Fund	DOA Fund	
	24214	24215		24229	24230	
1999	266,958.00	26,862.00	6,039.00	12,124.00		
2000	297,756.00	23,820.00	5,910.00	11,781.00		
2001	306,865.00	28,434.00	3,060.00	10,472.00		
2002	378,168.00	32,956.00		9,429.00		
2003	423,366.00	39,708.00		7,406.00		
2004	430,376.00	30,550.00		11,249.00		
2005	493,316.00	27,832.00		12,964.00		
2006	480,028.00	25,618.00		14,420.00		
2007	414,049.00	23,298.00		14,063.00	3,909.00	
2008	304,042.00	21,336.00		11,039.00	26,175.00	
2009	318,863.00	22,716.00		11,284.00	27,118.00	
2010	279,540.00	19,540.00		9,450.00	23,878.00	
2011	258,141.00	19,066.00		7,931.00	22,948.00	
2012						
	4,651,468.00	341,736.00	15,009.00	143,612.00	104,028.00	State 5,255,853.00

Year	Interest	Over Payment Fund	County 20% Transfer	Laredo Account	Redaction Fund	County Misc Fee
		24227	41230	46120	46123	46130
1999			67,182.00			137,884.00
2000			74,728.00			134,558.00
2001	231.00		76,983.00			189,354.00
2002	261.00		94,542.00			216,842.00
2003	104.00		105,870.00			270,431.00
2004			107,686.00			216,677.00
2005		92.00	123,367.00	10,086.00		196,546.00
2006		230.00	120,012.00	15,718.00		181,442.00
2007		170.00	103,512.00	15,794.00		164,884.00
2008		136.00	76,103.00	15,596.00		148,155.00
2009		153.00	79,716.00	15,811.00		169,310.00
2010		89.00	69,885.00	16,998.00	26,985.00	169,324.00
2011		30.00	64,535.00	18,573.00	48,485.00	190,560.00
2012						
	596.00	900.00	1,164,121.00	108,576.00	75,470.00	2,385,967.00

County 3,735,630.00