

Department Updates



Barron County, Wisconsin

Clerk of Court

Judith Espeseth Clerk of Court

The Register of Deeds office and this office shared \$20,000.00 in an effort to scan documents. The Clerk of Circuit Court's half of the funds was exhausted yesterday after Linda Zoellick, temporary employee assigned to scanning, worked at the project for nine

months. Several years of files in the criminal misdemeanor and criminal felony areas were scanned, allowing us to destroy the paper file. Not only does this provide more space for current and future files, but the old files are now available via computer to court personnel.

Sixteen hundred 2010 juror

questionnaires have been mailed and are coming back to this office. Each questionnaire is reviewed to determine eligibility and information entered into the computer. This huge task is absorbed by staff in this office and once it is accomplished a huge sigh of relieve can be heard.



Health & Human Services

Judy Demers, Director

Due to the large number of applications the state has received for the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan covering adults with no dependent children, a waiting list will now be established. Upon the creation of the program, the intent was that it would be budget-neutral. The threshold for budget-neutrality has been exceeded; therefore the waiting list is a necessity.

Wednesday, October 7, 2009, was the first day for taking mass applications for the Heating Assistance program. The total number of applications taken was 156. In addition, on Monday, October 12, 14 more appointments are scheduled. Application numbers are ex-

pected to be as much as 70% higher than last year due to the higher income limits for eligibility. The benefit payment levels are approximately 50% less than they were a year ago.

A tentative timeline for transition of CCO(Community Care Organization) recipients from the county has been set for January 1, 2010. Meetings with individual recipients or guardians are set for November 10-11, to review their options of either Family Care or IRIS. There are 30 such recipients to be affected. CCO was a program piloted in Barron County in the late seventies, and because of its uniqueness, it has taken the State additional time to determine how to transition them to the new long term care

system. These recipients were guaranteed life-long entitlement at the time they enrolled in CCO.

As vaccine becomes available, Public Health staff will be providing vaccinations to children in Barron County schools and daycares. There are approximately 8500 school children in the county. It is anticipated that school clinics will begin to be scheduled toward the end of October, and parents of children in daycares can bring their children to the closest school for vaccination. A mass clinic is anticipated to be scheduled for later in the season, depending on availability of the vaccine.



Inside this issue:

<i>Economic Development</i>	2
<i>County Clerk</i>	2
<i>Human Resources</i>	3
<i>Soil & Water Conservation</i>	4
<i>Administration / Committee Update</i>	5

Economic Development

David Miller, Director

There is a new Tourism website to pass along to your friends, relatives and neighbors. In fact, please pass it along through your databases for folks to visit.

But first, you should visit the site at www.wistcroixarea.com and take look around. This site is a first, not only for the county but the state and it's also a revival, of sorts. Nearly three years ago, I was asked to revive the "Governor's St. Croix Area Promotion Council", a sub-regional collaboration started by then Governor Tommy Thompson. The collaboration first came about, along with five others around the state, in areas where Native American Tribes were building their Casino and Hotel Operations. At the time, there was considerable difference of opinions across many counties regarding the Tribal businesses and fishing issues. Governor Thompson thought it was a good idea to establish the Promotion Councils to assist in "Public Relations" and frankly, as a means for folks to get along. Fast forward, 20 years and the Department of Tourism thought it would be a good idea to revive the Councils, with a twist: establish a new Council that promoted all the businesses, "things to do", recreational activities and so forth. but include the counties of Barron, Burnett and Polk and the three Casino operations at Turtle Lake, Danbury and Hertel and the St. Croix River Valley.

There is so much more behind this effort, but it's a lot more fun to review the site. So head on over to the web address given and enjoy! If you want more background on how this was developed, I'd be happy to talk with you about it. There is a "launch meeting" being planned for October the 29th. Including yourselves, all of our Leadership from our State and Federal Legisla-

tors, State Tourism and Tourism-Related Agencies, the Tribal Leadership, the "Governor's St. Croix area Promotional Committee" and the Governor are invited.

Ongoing Projects:

The Energy Related Stimulus Program is now under the "energy Efficiency Community Development Block Grant" program. The program for the county is competitive in nature and there is a November 12, 2009 deadline for grant's submission. This is a combined effort drawing input from the Economic Development Department, UW-Extension Office, County Maintenance Department and all members of the county's Energy Policy Committee. This is the final stage of the project since its notification through the Office of energy Independence in July of this year.

The Department, in collaboration with the Barron County Economic Development Corporation (BCEDC) and the UW-Extension Office are preparing to conduct a Business Retention & Expansion Survey and Labor Market Study later this fall. The collaborators ran the same studies in 2005 and it's time to update the data from our county's businesses. About 150 businesses will be contacted for both studies, initially by the Department and UW-Extension and then by members from the BCEDC, who will handle the pick-up of the surveys and person-to-person contact with the businesses. Everyone knows the economy has changed over the past 18 months and it's not only important to know the future plans for our businesses, but also those businesses in the region. 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 Com-

merce on the BRE side and through UW Extensions on the Labor Market side of the studies. The results will then be combined to present a sub-region county view of the economy across the three counties. 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.

The Department's Director and one representative from the Barron County Economic Development Corporation worked the "6-Industry" Trade Show in Rosemont, IL, the week of September 20 through the 25th. The Department and the BCEDC began planning for this show in February of this year. The Economic Development Display used in trade show exhibits, consists of over 100 photos and other graphic informational pieces to describe the cities, villages, recreation, tourism, new projects and the business community throughout the county.

It takes about two months to update all the national advertising pieces and collaterals. It typically takes 3 months to update the photos each spring and summer, providing the weather is good on an annual basis to prep for the shows. This show consisted of 6 major industries under one roof, had over 1,000 exhibitors and drew a crowd of about 300,000 over a three day period. It's a very major effort by the Department and we are fortunate to have one of the BCEDC Board Members, Vern Peterson, who helps out for the week. It also allows the efforts and the BCEDC expense for the show to hit all six industries at one time, reducing the need to attend 5 other trade shows held across the county on an annual basis. Whew! Next up- April 2010.

County Clerk

DeeAnn Cook, County Clerk

Our new website will have the capability of drawing from a database for things like contact information on County Board Supervisors and Municipalities. The real advantage of that is data is stored in one source but can appear in multiple places on the web. When a change occurs, we will update the database then information on the web will automatically be changed wherever it appears on the web. It requires

quite a bit of work up front but the end result is worth it. We will also be providing a link to any municipality that has a website. Fortunately, Jeff Sirek in our Technology Department is a real wiz at all of this. He can take a database that I created and make it do all the things we need it to do.

Command Central, our election equipment vendor, conducted the annual maintenance on the equipment in September. Muni-

palities had the choice of bringing their equipment here or to the City of Rice Lake.

Just a reminder to please pay \$10 to the County Board Bereavement/Retirement fund if you have not done so already.

Human Resources

Rachael Richie, HR Director

New / Replacement Positions				
<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Office / Department</u>	<u>Incumbent</u>	<u>Date Filled</u>	<u>New / Replacement</u>
Civilian Corrections Officer	Sheriff	Steve Hostettler (moved from PT to FT)	10/7/09	Replacement

- The County met again with the bargaining unit on 10/8/09 to discuss union negotiations.
- There were 6 responses to the health insurance RFP. WPS has responded with a 16.4% increase for 2010 which was the smallest increase of all the responses. A 16.4% increase results in an additional \$690,000 for 2010.
- Flu shots scheduled for 10/6/09 were canceled as a result of a shortage of the vaccine. The shots will be rescheduled for 10/22/09.
- The Employee Recognition Picnic was held on October 1st with approximately 80 individuals attending! The picnic was moved indoors as a result of rain/cold that day. The following employees reached an employment milestone in 2009:

30 Years of Service

Kelly Cornelius Kim Grover Mary Hover Michael Peterson

25 Year of Service

Russell Marske Kenneth Filter Donald Novak

20 Years of Service

Caryn Becker Barbara Balts Marla Prytz Nancy Drake
Gordon Nesseth Michael Flach Mark Koenecke Gay Radosevich
Angela Hoff

15 Years of Service

Sally Ellison Rita Smits Sharon Millermon Bruce Sockness
Greg Slack Craig Bowen Patricia Haas

10 Years of Service

Beatrice Amdall Amy Pavick Judith Lansin Bonnie Roemhild
Jessica Wager Bradley Jahr Judith Demers Tonya Eichelt
Nathan Nelson Gary Gall Jeffery Sirek Jeffrey Nelson
Robert David Miller Rachael Richie Sarah Jane Sinclair Iwanna Joy Workman
Deanne Alsbury Jennifer Holub Rhonda Sukys Donald Strenke
Randall Cook Susan Sand Kelly Devine Frederick Cross
Justin Rausch Mark Hoff Shane Robel Ronald Baures
Ricky Schill Sharon Prince Jeremy Musil

In addition, approximately 20 individuals participated in the Lee® National Denim Day on 10/1/09 by wearing jeans in exchange for a \$5 donation towards breast cancer awareness.



Soil & Water Conservation

Dale Hanson, County Conservationist

Two new programs will be setting the stage for conservation in the next few years. The first is the new federal program known as Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), administered by NRCS personnel. The CSP program encourages landowners to address all resource needs, and is eligible for farmers, rural non-farm landowners, woodland owners, and others. The second program is the Working Lands Initiative, the state program that is replacing the Farmland Preservation Program. Once fully implemented, farmers will be eligible for state tax credits for not developing agriculture land and following a conservation plan, and agriculture enterprise areas will be designated.

Construction on the Moon Lake Dam will likely begin the week of October 12 or October 19.

While I write this report, I have worked as the County Conservationist for Barron County for 27 years, 9 months, 3 weeks, and 3 days. Human nature being what it is we think about what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, or next year. What we do in soil and water conservation, as well as other areas of resource management, the outcomes are rarely seen in the short term. None-the-less conservation of our natural resources is vital to the long term viability of the human race, other inhabitants of the Earth, our economy, and more. I am thankful that elected officials and other community leaders, when investing public resources, have had the vision to look at the value of protecting our natural resources over the long haul, not just the next budget year.

One of the best ways to ensure long term care for our natural resources is to instill an appreciation and concern for them in young people. To that end, I have made conservation education one of the priorities in the 27+ years that I have been County Conservationist. Between classroom appearances, which are all too seldom due to time restraints, the scholarships we offer for high school graduates, and the Natural Resources Building at the county fair, I talk to hundreds of young people every year. Those young people who are considering a career in conserva-

tion often say it is the desire to work outdoors that attracts them to the field. In the interest of being truthful and realistic, I tell them that most resource conservation employees do not spend the majority of their time working outdoors.

If one were to calculate the hours spent in different areas of a conservation career, the vast majority of employees would say that people management takes the biggest share of their time. The reason is obvious; no matter if we are pursuing a project to prevent soil erosion, protect a lake or river from polluted runoff, improve wildlife habitat, or any of numerous other resource concerns, it is the people who own or occupy the land that we must deal with. It is that component of this job that has been most enjoyable and rewarding. I find Barron County to be unique because the majority of people are good people, who are honest, friendly, hard working, and want Barron County to continue to be the kind of place they are proud to call home. It has been very rewarding, each time I have discussed conservation with a Barron County resident, be it a farmer, a lakeshore owner, a boater at a landing when I am asking to inspect their boat for aquatic plants, or an elected official, the concern for our natural resources has always been sincere.

In the past 2 ½ decades the natural resource priorities have been topsoil, surface waters, and groundwater. To conserve topsoil we have promoted the practices of no till, conservation tillage, grass waterways, and others. Surface water projects include the Hay and Yellow River Watershed projects, and numerous other water quality projects. To protect groundwater hundreds of idle wells have been sealed and abandoned, and soil lined manure storage facilities were prohibited.

It was in 1990 that we enacted an ordinance that ended the practice of installing soil lined manure storage facilities on Barron County farms, and required either concrete or plastic liners, which ultimately demonstrated that the people of Barron County want to do the right thing. Enacting this ordinance was not a decision that was taken lightly, nor should the decision to enact and enforce a rule on citizens in a democracy ever be taken lightly. This ordinance would require a practice that is much more expensive than soil lined facili-

ties, however 40 Barron County farmers showed up for the hearing, 39 were in favor of the change. Since 1990, 40 new manure storage facilities have been built in the county, all lined with concrete or heavy plastic, and 50 idle manure storage facilities have been abandoned.

Because the natural resources of Barron County are important, I have never shied away from a new opportunity to get conservation on the ground or to enable citizens to protect the resources on their property or in their community. In 1982 the department worked in 7 areas of resource protection. In 2009 we work in 24 areas. Too numerous to list all of them, three very important areas are prioritizing soil conservation when the state penalizes counties for prioritizing anything but managing crop nutrients, and our invasive species program, which among other things has trained dozens of lake association members as watercraft inspectors to slow the spread of Eurasian Milfoil. Lastly is the Cumberland municipal waste water trading project, the only successful point for non point nutrient trading project in Wisconsin.

On October 30, 2009, (27 years, 10 months, 3 weeks, and 2 days later) I will retire from Barron County employment. It doesn't matter so much what we do in life, as long as we do it for the right reason. I plan to continue working to protect our natural resources in the area of environmental education. I appreciate the fact that most of the Barron County people I have dealt with in the past 27+ years have conducted themselves with honesty and integrity. It has been an honor to work for Barron County.



Administration / Committee Update

Jeff French, Interim Administrator

Extension/Land Conservation Committee:

Accepted the 4-H Youth Development Agent Position and authorized filling this position. Effectively what will happen is Annette Bjorkland will return to her duties in Washburn County and we will hire a new person for her position.

Reviewed the Draft portion of the Comprehensive Use Plan, making some minor changes which will be brought back next month.

Property Committee:

Reviewed the Utilities and Community Facilities portion of the Comprehensive Use Plan.

Approved allowing County Clerk to sign Lumbering Hall of Fame – Shore land Restoration Restrictive Covenant.

Received information on and discussed the erosion plan at Martins Island on Prairie Lake. Cost estimates for this project will be forthcoming along with a work plan to be completed over the 2009/2010 winter.

Allowed the use of \$ 2,500 of County dollars to be used as matching funds for a handicapped accessible fishing pier at the messen-bring recreation area.

Approved a \$400 payment to the Birchwood Snowmobile club for work done on the ATV trail. Because this expenditure was not previously approved by the Recreation Officer the \$400 payment represents ½ of the total requested.

Allowed staff to proceed with the process of applying for Energy Efficiency Grants for County owned buildings.

Voted to sell parcel of County property 40ft by 370ft located on Kirby Lake for \$ 18,600, which is 1.5x appraised price, pending approval by full County Board.

Voted to not rename Government Center after Mr. John Quarderer.

Received information from staff on: Emerald Ash Borer signing, this is pending

approval from State DOT.

Future plans for Office Complex: staff has not had contact from International Center

Executive:

Received a presentation from Tracy Mofel on a food network or food security assessment she is developing as part of her Master's degree. She is asking for \$ 4,000 of County funds to be matched with \$ 1,000 of funds she raises from other communities. Executive will take up her request in November.

Highway grievance was settled prior to coming before the Committee.

Reviewed the 2010 budget and CICOP budget:

For budget publication purposes set the 2010 levy at \$ 16,890,748 an increase of \$ 393,123 or 2.3% over 2009. A copy of this document will be enclosed in the Board packet.

Forwarded to County Board a resolution allowing the Interim Administrator and Corporation Counsel the opportunity to explore the most advantageous financing available for the WTE electrical generation project.

Setting of Agendas: County Board Agendas are not set by Executive. My policy is as follows.

As Interim Administrator I have a filing system for every Board, Committee or Commission. When any subject matter is brought to my attention I place that topic item into its appropriate file. I then forward or incorporate this matter into the agenda as appropriate. This may include but is not limited to discussing the subject matter with the Department Head, Committee Chair, Board Chairman and/or Vice Chairs.

Page 22 of the Rules and Procedures States: "Every subject matter shall be referred without motion or debate to its appropriate committee unless otherwise directed".

Forwarded to County Board a resolution allowing the interim financing for the WTE

electrical generation project.

Reviewed the Inter-Governmental Cooperation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Approved consolidation of Soil and Water, Zoning, Land Information, Forest and Recreation, and Economic Development.

Received update from Ad-Hoc Recruitment

Other Pertinent Information:

The WWRTA is in the process of selecting a project manager who will oversee the construction contractor there were approximately 9 firms interested in this position as of October 9th.

Even though the weather was uncooperative we still had a great time and held the Employee recognition picnic in rooms 110A & B on Thursday October 1st. A big thanks to Jess Miller, Lee Romsos, Paul Streif and his wife for attending.

