Department Updates

November, 2023

Waste to Energy & Recycling

Brent Bohn, Director

The old saying "One person's trash is another person's treasure" is certainly holding true for the third and fourth quarter of 2023. The hail storm in Rice Lake this summer was one to remember. So far this year, from July through November, we received over 3,650 tons of construction and demolition waste compared to 1,228 tons during the same time last year. That's almost a 300% increase and a result of the damage from the hailstorm. To say the Waste to Energy side of things has been busy would be an understatement.

The DNR recently released its 2023 Air Quality Trends Report. The annual report includes state monitoring data through 2022 for air pollutants regulated under the federal Clean Air Act, including ground-level ozone, particle pollution, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide. While concentrations of these pollutants have decreased over the last two decades, in recent years the report shows two of the most harmful pollutants – ozone and fine particulates – have decreased only modestly in recent years.

The 2023 report shows that since the early 2000s, statewide ozone concentrations have decreased 21%. With these reductions, the entire state is meeting the federal 2008 ozone standard. However, with only modest improvements, and even slight concentration increases along the Lake Michigan shoreline in recent years, the Milwaukee area and parts of Sheboygan and Kenosha counties are not meeting the more stringent 2015 ozone standard. The 2023 trends report also includes updated national emissions inventory data through 2020. The data shows that emissions of most directly emitted pollutants or their precursors have decreased substantially since 2002. Highlights from this data include:

- A 72% decrease in reported emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and a 28% decrease in volatile organic compounds (VOCs) – key ingredients that form ground-level ozone.
- Emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO_2) decreased by 93%, with the largest reductions coming from the electric utility fuel combustion sector.
- Emissions of carbon monoxide (CO) decreased by 58%, with most of the reductions coming from highway vehicles and the off-highway sector.

We will be seeing some changes on the Recycling side also. Starting December 1st we will no longer be staffing the staffed recycling sites in Chetek and Haugen. These sites will be converted to be open 24-7/365 for the public's recycling needs. We will also be installing a new baler in the Recycling Center later this year. The new baler will be able to yield heavier and smaller bales which will better align our process with industry standards. I am also VERY EXCITED to announce that we are looking into expanding the acceptable recyclable materials to include food and beverage cartons such as milk, juice, soup, broth and wine cartons! We are still navigating the process changes to implement this and we are hoping to be ready to accept these materials starting January 1, 2024. More to come on this.

In This Issue:

Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

Jennifer Jako, Director

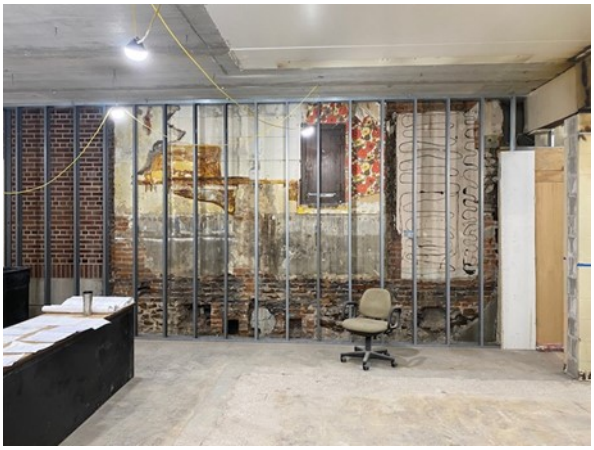
November is National Family Caregiver Month. The ADRC held a special event "Family Caregiver Voices" on November 2 for family caregivers to share with their local legislators about their caregiver needs and the systems they struggle with. Unfortunately, our country has looked at care as something families have to figure out on their own. Too often, families are stretched thin and many feel like they've personally failed in some way. Right now, there are 53 million unpaid family caregivers in the U.S. By 2040, that number is expected to double. Some interesting statistics:

- 10,000 people in the U.S. turn 65 every day
- 70% of people over age 65 need long-term care for an average of 3 years
- 80% of care is provided by family members
- 1 year in a nursing home can cost $80,000 and Medicare doesn't pay
- Wisconsin is experiencing an acute shortage of direct care workers in every sector of the long term care system and is particularly severe in rural areas such as northwest Wisconsin.

Today's family caregivers are often expected to perform highly complex tasks, including medical tasks, care coordination, medication administration, and technological support – activities that extend well beyond the help with activities of daily living that were the hallmark of family caregiving in years gone by. More and more family caregivers are coming to the ADRC for support. We help people find ways to utilize their private funds to maintain their independence for as long as possible. We also help people understand private and public benefits to meet their needs. The only way we can get better care for our loved ones, better support for our families, and better jobs for direct care workers is by shifting how our culture values care. The event was well attended and our legislators Senator Quinn and Representative Armstrong valued hearing personal stories from the caregiving community and plan to use the input to help inform their support of various proposed or new legislation supporting family caregivers.

Aging & Disability Resource Center (Continued)

Nutrition Program Kitchen update: The kitchen project continues to be on track since the start on July 5, 2023 through expected completion January 31, 2024. The Aging/ADRC Kitchen Facility Committee meets as needed to get project updates, approve change orders, approve pay applications, and monitor progress. Aging staff also attend bi-weekly contractor meetings to stay appraised of project status. Darby Smith and I recently toured Eau Claire County's new MOW kitchen, which is very similar to our project; our goal was to see what, if anything they would have done differently now that their project is completed.



We are busy at the end of the year with Medicare Part D Open Enrollment, our annual Centenarian Celebration, submitting multiple transportation grants and coordination plans, finishing up our new volunteer onboarding process, and getting contracts and workplans set to go for 2024. While many things "to do" can feel like a lot of red tape sometimes, the outcomes we see with the community members we help everyday makes it worth it.

If you or anyone you know needs any information about our services or needs help planning for the future, please call at 888-538-3031 or 715-537-6225, email staff, or check out our website at www.adrcconnections.org, or like us on Facebook @ADRCBarron.

County Clerk

Jessica Hodek, County Clerk

The County Clerk's Office has officially started the 2024 Election Cycle! Prepping for any election starts well before election day in our office but it's hard to believe that we are discussing the 2024 elections already. There are 4 scheduled elections this year with the typically highest turnout in November due to the presidential race. There are also many contests on the April ballot including: Presidential Preference, Barron County Circuit Court Judge - Branch 2, County Board Supervisors, various municipal offices as well as potential school boards and referendums. All 29 County Board Supervisor seats will all be up for election this April. Candidates are currently filing campaign paperwork with a due date of January 2, 2024 to obtain ballot status. Anyone interested in pursuing candidacy at the County level is encouraged to contact our office so we can assist them with the necessary paperwork. All candidates that have filed campaign paperwork, including non-candidacy, for County level races can be viewed on our Barron County website under the County Clerk's Election page. Brace yourself, this will be a year when you hear about elections every time you watch TV, browse the internet or turn on your radio!

Medical Examiner

Nate Dunston, Medical Examiner

2023 Reported Deaths:

Month	Total Cases	M	F	Natural	Suicide	Homicide	Accidental	Pending	Undetermined	Autopsy	Cremations	Death Certificates
January	41	25	16	34	0	0	7	0	0	1	28	11
February	41	16	25	40	0	0	1	0	0	0	33	6
March	46	21	25	43	1	0	2	0	0	2	43	11
April	43	24	19	33	1	3	6	0	0	4	35	14
May	38	23	15	33	1	0	3	0	0	2	30	13
June	46	28	18	40	3	1	2	0	0	2	39	18
July	38	23	15	36	2	0	0	0	0	2	29	14
August	51	26	25	46	0	0	4	1	0	3	39	10
September	39	22	17	35	0	0	4	0	0	0	32	10
October	42	18	24	37	1	1	2	1	0	2	36	12
November	29	17	12	24	2	0	2	1	0	1	24	11
Totals	**454**	**243**	**211**	**401**	**11**	**5**	**33**	**3**	**0**	**19**	**368**	**130**

*Numbers current as of November 14, 2023.