



Department Updates

December 2018

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Highway

Mark Servi Highway Commissioner

It appears that winter has arrived, with temperatures below freezing and snow already on the ground. Despite the impact of an extremely wet fall, we have managed to complete most of our construction projects, and the few remaining critical items will be completed this week. With the completion of CTH W in Cameron all roads on the County System are now open. Pavement marking remains on CTH W and CTH NN, and with the weather forecast that will most likely not be completed until spring.

All the other projects that were ongoing in the County on the State Highway System (STH 48 bridge replacements between STH 25 and Rice Lake) and the repaving and intersection work on STH 48 on the north side of Rice Lake have also been completed.

The remaining project that impacts traffic is the replacement of the Main Street Bridge over the Red Cedar River in Rice Lake. The existing structure is really two bridges. The old west side structure is a two span concrete arch bridge built in the 1940's, and is being completely removed and replaced. The east structure

was built in the late 1970's, and will have a deck replacement once the traffic can be switched to the new west side structure. This project has been a challenge so far. The contractor has encountered multiple previously unknown obstructions below the ground that have necessitated full road closures as they work to clear the obstruction and move the project forward. Project completion is scheduled for August of 2019.

We have received funding for the replacement of five bridges, one on the county system and four on town roads. Once the agreements with the state are signed, we can begin design with the goal of replacement of these bridges in FY 2021 and FY 2022. The Highway Department will manage the design and construction of these bridges.

As we transition into winter maintenance (PLOWING SNOW) we remind you to drive with care in the winter season. This means paying attention to changing road conditions, being alert for the plow trucks that are working to clear the snow from the roads, and other drivers using the roads. Please put the phones down and use caution. Remember to not use your cruise control – hitting one small slippery spot can

result in the wheels losing traction and a resulting accident. Slow down and give yourself additional time to safely reach your destination. Also remember that just because it is winter does not mean we are not out performing maintenance tasks on the roads. When you encounter a work zone please use caution. The lives of your friends and neighbors who are working within that zone depend on you!

**ICE & SNOW
TAKE IT SLOW**

Reduce Speed
When it snows, use your head not your feet.

Travel Safe
Don't crowd the plow. A snowplow operator's field of vision is restricted. You may see them but they may not see you.

Be Prepared
Before leaving home, find out about the driving conditions. If the weather is bad, remember, ice and snow, take it slow, or just don't go.

clearroads.org

Finance

Jodi Busch **Finance Director**

The Finance Department had a very busy fall season focusing on the 2019 budget. At the November 5th County Board meeting, a County Levy was set at \$21,315,394; an increase from 2018 of \$398,581 or 1.91%. Once the budget was approved, it was full speed ahead as the County Apportionment calculations were finalized and sent out to the municipalities and Department of Revenue. Soon after, the Levy Limit Worksheet was completed and also sent to the DOR. Next came the setup of the 2019 Departmental Budgets in our financial software system. Did you know that the County Budget is divided up between almost 1400 separate departmental accounts? As you can imagine, it takes a great deal of time throughout the budget process to enter, calculate, and check, to insure that everything ties out to what was approved. Now with just a few more tasks to complete, we will be ready for 2019.

2019 will bring changes to the Finance Department as well. After more than 30 years with Barron County, Kathy Hanson will be retiring. It has been a joy to work with Kathy over the years and we are all going to miss her knowledge, friendship and quick wit here in Finance. We wish her all the best in her well earned retirement.

In addition to preparing and looking ahead to the New Year, we are also looking back over

2018 to begin our year-end processes. CliftonLarsonAllen will be onsite the week of December 10th for their annual preliminary audit visit. By spending a few days here in December, they can take care of some of the more tedious tasks, which will help streamline the audit process when they come again in the spring.

We are also working with CLA to update our Internal Controls. Because we have limited staff in several departments, we have a Segregation of Duties finding in our annual Financial Statements. Last year, we started looking through various accounting functions to assess where the deficiencies are. In 2018 we have been working on the Accounts Payable process. While the Auditors are onsite, we will be reviewing these processes to try to mitigate any issues in the disbursement area.

As we move into 2019, we will start reconciling 2018 accounts and prepare the necessary work papers. W-2's, 1095's, and 1099's will be calculated and sent out in January, and we will be assisting departments with their year-end deposits, payments, and any necessary adjusting entries through February. Late February and March will consist of closing the books County-wide, and in April we will be putting everything together for when the Auditors visit at the end of the month. The whole process of closing the year and preparing for the audit takes several months to complete. The Finance Team

will be working together through the winter to insure deadlines are met and all reconciliations are completed accurately.

On behalf of the Barron County Finance Department, we wish you a blessed Christmas Season and Happy New Year!

County Clerk

DeeAnn Cook County Clerk

Turnout for the November 6, 2018 General Election was somewhat higher than usual. 18,675 votes were cast in Barron County which is approximately 76% of registered and 40% of eligible voters. At the comparable 2014 election, 16,827 votes were cast and at the 2016 Presidential Election, 22,926 votes were cast. All of our results were in and posted to our website prior to 11:00 PM. In the Village of New Auburn, there was a reporting unit where no votes were cast leaving 0's for results so it appeared like Barron County was not complete. Unfortunately, even some national media was questioning why Barron County was only 99% reported late that night. I sent out communication to our local media so they understand the situation and asked

them to help get the word out for future elections because this is likely to be a recurring issue. Thanks to Vonnie Ritchie, Jeff and Pam French and Julie Henningsen who again volunteered their time helping take in election results with Jessica and I while Jeff Sirek uploaded the results to our website remotely.

As of early December, our office has issued 261 marriage licenses, which is far below our "unofficial yearly goal" of 300. County Board approved an increase from \$75 to \$90 for the fee for marriage licenses effective January 1, 2019. It had been many years since there has been an increase and our fee is well in line with other counties. We also have gotten set up to accept credit cards for marriage licenses. There will be a fee of \$3 for any couple wishing to pay for their license

with credit card. Of course, there is still the option of cash or check for no additional fee.

2019 Dog license tags have been distributed to the municipal treasurers and they have started bringing in their final settlements for 2018. No changes in fees for 2019.

UPCOMING ELECTION SCHEDULE FOR 2019:

- Spring Primary Election - Tuesday, February 19
- Spring Election - Tuesday, April 2

DON'T

Trucks release salt and sand from the back of the truck - if you're too close to the truck, materials could hit your windshield & obstruct visibility.

Crowd the Plow!

NEVER PASS Plow on the RIGHT
Plows push snow to right shoulder & may use a wing (often 6-8 feet long) which is difficult to see.

BLIND SPOT

BLIND SPOT

Don't assume the plow driver can see your vehicle. The driver's field of vision is limited. You may see them, but they may not see you.

Plow trucks travel between 25-35 MPH. Allow enough time & space to safely stop/slow down.

Remain at least 70-feet (four car lengths) away from the plow truck to

1. ensure the driver can see you at all times
2. allow time for you to slow down or stop
3. avoid obstructing visibility from material release or cloud of snow

Remember: Plow trucks may need to "back up" at intersections during storm clean-so please leave them room to do so