



Department Updates

March 2020

Veterans Service Officer

Scott Bachowski
Veterans Service Officer

Scanning Project

The Veterans Service Office began scanning our veterans' files in August 2017 and to date we have scanned approximately 3000 files of the 7500 paper files that we currently store in filing cabinets. We have not been able to scan as much in 2019 as we would have liked due to the Blue Water Navy Act. We instead used our time to reach out to 100s of veterans to determine their disability eligibility benefits. We have a couple filing cabinets available; if interested, please let us know if you would like the cabinets. We estimate the project will take an additional 1 1/2 years to complete.

2019 Completed Work

In 2019, the Veterans Service Office processed 144 Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) Service-Connected disability claims, 15 DVA Non-Service Connected Disability Pension claims, 76 medical applications, 38 grave marker applications, and 29 burial reimbursement applications. We also registered 110 new county veterans into our database; this is an impressive number of new veterans being exposed to the benefits they have earned.

GDX Expenditure Report / 2018 Completed Work

The 2018 Geographic Distribution of Veteran Affairs Expenditures (GDX) statistics have been released by the Department of Veteran Affairs. The listing includes VA Compensation and Pension; and, Readjustment (Education) and Vocational Rehabilitation expenditures. The GDX also shows the estimated veteran population for each state and county. According to the 2018 statistics Barron County has a population of 3,491 Veterans; those veterans are receiving \$12,374,000 in VA Compensation and Pension (C&P). As a comparison, in 2017; Barron County had 3,575 veterans and received \$12,509,000. With the number of veterans decreasing, we continue to maintain our disability compensation and pension dollars coming into the county.

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Finance

Jodi Busch **Finance Director**

Spring time is audit time in the Finance Department. In addition to daily duties, staff has been very busy reconciling accounts and closing out 2019. The Highway audit fieldwork by our external auditors, CliftonLarsonAllen, will be conducted the week of March 23rd. The county-wide audit will commence April 20th.

The county-wide audit consists of CLA being onsite for approximately 3 weeks conducting fieldwork, which includes reviewing audit workpapers and reconciliations, testing internal controls, and reviewing grant activity. Based on this information, Financial Statements will be developed, compiled and submitted to various agencies with a deadline of July 31st. We strive to continually receive an unmodified audit opinion which is the highest rating that can be received by Generally Accepted Accounting Principle (GAAP) standards. This score helps our bond rating as well as grant eligibility.

We continue to work on eliminating the Segregation of Duties finding in our Financial Statements. This finding is due to limited staffing in various areas of the county. With the 2018 audit, we assessed and rectified the accounts payable functions of the County and implemented an all-encompassing accounts payable policy. With the 2019 audit, our focus will turn to the payroll functions of the county. In the upcoming months, assessments will be performed and changes in processes will be implemented as needed.

County Forest

John Cisek, **County Forest Administrator**

The winter of 2019 – 2020 provided good ground conditions for harvesting. The back-log of sales were completed.

All sales except one (Missed Tornado Sale) that were completed this past winter have been hauled. Volumes are currently being tabulated and billings will go out soon after. Five sales will be closed out when final payments are made. Any road / trail repair will be completed as conditions dry. The final storm related salvage sale will be negotiated or advertised this spring.

The DNR Audit took place on March 12, 2020. Twenty sales closed out between 2017 and 2019 we reviewed. Results will be provided shortly.

A timber sale bid opening is tentatively scheduled for this summer / fall. Location of sales are to be determined.