



Department Updates

June 2017

Finance Department

Jodi Busch
Finance Director

We are winding up the audit season in the Barron County Finance Department.

CliftonLarsonAllen was onsite from April 24th through May 19th to audit the Financials for 2016. Our most familiar CLA staff has moved on since last year, so we had several new faces in 2017.

With this brought more questions as to how things are done in Barron County. Areas of focus included auditing various accounts in all Barron County Funds, Grant Testing, Fixed Assets, Payroll, Treasurer's Cash and Investments. In addition to the various audit processes conducted while onsite, CLA also continues to provide information and instruction as to new accounting rules and expectations

coming down the pike. They continue to be a great resource to the Finance Department and we look forward to their visit when we get this chance to work with them.

Even though CLA's onsite visit is completed, the audit continues, with them compiling our Financial Statements and preparing reports to be filed with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue and Federal Government. Once completed, drafts of the Financial Statements will be sent to Barron County for our review. Once our review is completed, reports will be filed and the final Financial Statements will be printed. The final deadline for completion is July 31st.

As we finalize the audit, our focus will now

switch to the 2018 Budget. New budget spreadsheets will be created, and wage projections will be calculated and distributed to the departments with the budget worksheets the second week of July. Then it is full speed ahead to build a balanced budget over the summer, with final County Board approval in early November.

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Veterans Service Office

Scott Bachowski Veterans Service Office

GDX Expenditure Report / 2016 Completed Work - The 2016 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 2016 statistics Barron County has a population of 3,634 Veterans; those veterans are receiving \$12,500,000 in VA Compensation and Pension (C&P). As a comparison, in 2015; Barron County had 3,691 veterans and received \$11,200,000. With the number of veterans decreasing, we continue to increase our disability compensation and pension dollars coming into the county.

Barron County Veterans received \$895,000 worth of Education and Vocational Rehabilitation benefits in 2016 down from \$906,000 in 2015. This benefit is educating our veterans and directly supporting our local Educational Institutions.

The Barron County Veterans Service Office had their best year ever in completing and submitting disability & pension claims for Barron County veterans! In 2016, the Barron County Veter-

ans Service Office completed and submitted 148 disability claims and 20 non-service connected pension claims. The current amount of these two benefits coming into Barron County is an astonishing \$12.5M. We also assisted 117 veterans in enrolling into or updating their means test with the Veterans Health Administration. Most importantly, we made contact with 153 new veterans that were previously unknown to our staff. We owe that success to all our veterans that continue to introduce us to their veteran friends and relatives.

CVSO Grants – The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) recently revised the County Veterans Service Office Grant. They have returned the grant back to a block grant in which we will continue to receive \$11,500 annually. We will continue to use the specified categories that were established under the reimbursement type grant to ensure compliance with acceptable expenditures. Those categories include the following: (a) information technology; (b) transportation for veterans and services to veterans with barriers; (c) special outreach to veterans; (d) training and services provided by the WDVA and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and (e) salary and fringe benefit expenses. The WDVA will provide payments twice annually with the County Administrators certification.

Disaster Relief Assistance to Veterans – The Barron County VSO has made contact with 9 veterans affected by the tornado on May 16th, 2017. I would like to give a thunderous “Thank You” to the staff in Health and Human Services for helping us gather the names those veterans and their temporary locations. We were able to obtain grants from the 9th District Veterans of Foreign Wars Un-met Needs Program for each of those veterans! A huge “Shout Out” to the 9th District VFW! We also provide each veteran with grant applications that they could apply for with our assistance through the Disabled American Veterans, VFW, American Legion, American Veterans, and The Enlisted Association. I would like to give a special “Thank you” to all those organizations. Your generous contributions are greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank the Chetek Area Chamber of Commerce for all of their time and energy in assisting our veterans and all community members in need after the disaster. The Chamber was even able to get volunteers to help a disabled veteran move to his new permanent home last week.

Aging / ADRC

Leslie Fijalkiewicz, Director

The Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) has a wide range of programs, though you are probably most familiar with Meals on Wheels, AddLIFE Transit, Senior Dining, DAYBREAK, Benefits Counseling, and Dementia Care services. In a nutshell our agency lives by the “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” philosophy.

Our mission is to help folks remain as independent as possible in their home, thereby preventing the need for more expensive arrangements, like assisted living or nursing home care. Sometimes home is an apartment. Sometimes it's with family member(s). And of course, sometimes it's where they've lived for 40 years. Our concept of “home” can change over time, and that's ok.

How we define “independence” also changes. For most of us, the idea of giving up our driver's license is an end to our independence. However, ask someone who has given up driving and they will tell you something different. For them, being independent means being able to make their own arrangements to get to the grocery store, hair salon, and doctor's appointments. Same with cooking or cleaning...being inde-

pendent may mean accepting Meals on Wheels or hiring someone to clean. As we like to say, “Sometimes independence requires a little help.”

Another way in which the ADRC helps people stay independent, is through our healthy living programs. Programs that prevent falls, reduce caregiver stress, improve self management of diabetes and other health conditions are some of these healthy living programs. Best of all, these programs have been researched and shown to reduce falls, delay nursing home placement, reduce emergency room visits, etc....all of which save money. But more importantly, these programs allow people to remain more actively engaged in their community, and that benefits everyone! Here are the Health Promotion Programs offered by the ADRC, along with what the research has shown for benefits.

1. Stepping On – Reduces the incidence of falls by 51%.
2. Powerful Tools For Caregivers – Delays nursing home placement, shortens hospitalizations and reduces re-hospitalizations.
3. Healthy Living With Diabetes – Reduces Emergency Department visits by 53%.
4. Living Well With Chronic Conditions – Reduces hospitalizations by 22%.

5. Aging Mastery – Preliminary research indicates improved health behaviors, social connectedness, and communication with health providers.
6. Music & Memory – Preliminary research demonstrates reduced depression, anxiety, pain, and increased social interaction for persons with dementia.

Participating in these programs can certainly lead to some healthy outcomes, and that's important because in 2016, the number one ambulance call in Barron County was related to a fall...1,040 or about 3 a day! Plus, about every 2-3 days, there were calls for diabetic related problems. While I've no expectation that we can prevent every fall, diabetic emergency, or other health issue, we know these programs can have a positive impact.

We all talk about wanting to be independent but the reality is this...we are ALL dependent on others. For example, I can cook but fixing stuff (like lawn mowers or anything mechanical) is not my thing. My dad has difficulty understanding what the doctor is saying because his hearing is really impaired. My husband can't load the dishwasher...well actually, he CAN load it, he just can't do it correctly! Our kids are grown

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Aging / ADRC (Continued)

and no longer financially dependent...now they have become dependent on us for emotional (parenting) support. As our lives change, we become less dependent on people for some things and more dependent for other things. That's normal, it happens to all of us and for the most part we don't even

think about it. I guess you could say, one of the joys of being in the ADRC is that you get to help people see all of the things they CAN do!



Health & Human Services

Stacey Frolik, Director

Barron County Department of Health and Human Services has been involved and working on two major events, in addition to our normal day to day work, over the past couple of months. The Public Health Unit, under the direction of Laura Sauve, has been diligently working on the accreditation of our Level II Health Department. The accreditation process began in 2015 but really gained steam in the recent 6 months. All accreditation application materials and supporting documents were officially submitted to the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) on May 31, 2017. The mission of the PHAB is to promote and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of all health departments in the United States. We will now wait to receive

feedback on our application and make adjustments and/or provide more documentation if need be. For more in-depth information on this accreditation process please visit the following website. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lh-depts/accreditation/index.htm>

DHHS was also very involved in the disaster response following the May 16, 2017 tornado which affected a significant portion of our county. The response effort would not have been as successful without all the cooperation and collaboration of county departments, county employees, local businesses, state partners, faith-based community, and many, many county residents. We are now in the long-term recovery phase of the disaster which includes meeting human needs such as food, clothing and long

term shelter as well as mental health/trauma support. Other aspects of the recovery process are the debris clean-up and rebuilding of structures that were devastated by the tornado. If you or someone you know were impacted by the disaster and are in need of services please contact 715-537-5691 and select option #1. This is a phone line which goes to DHHS and is answered Monday-Friday from 8 am-4:30 pm. If you call that number outside of the indicated hours, please leave a message and someone will call you back to assist you with your needs. To keep up-to-date on other disaster announcements visit "What's New" on the county website, www.barroncountywi.gov.