



Department Updates

June 2019

Veterans Service Office

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 3900 files of the 7500 paper files that we currently store in filing cabinets. 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 10–18 months to complete.

Blue Water Navy Veterans – We have begun preparing for the anticipated change to the law allowing U.S. Navy and Marine veterans to apply for DVA disability; presumptively based on exposure to Agent Orange while not in-country. Previously the DVA only recognized veteran exposure to Agent Orange to veterans with “boots on ground” in Vietnam. Tami and I recently verified 5,000 electronic records within our VET-RASpec database to allow us to build a report of the veterans and families potentially affected by the law change. Our report has identified 300-400 Barron County veterans and/or family members that may be eligible to file a new claim. We are awaiting the change in the law and how the DVA will set the administrative rules based on ship location or area of operations. We will use aggressive outreach to get the word out about the change to the law when appropriate.

2019 Caregiver Conference – We will again support and attend the 2019 Regional Caregiver Conference on October 25th at Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College in Rice Lake.

Direct Upload – We have asked our Veteran database provider (VETRASpec) to develop and allow us to direct upload claims to the DVA. After a few months of development, they were able to make that an option for us. This process will speed up veteran claim processing and save us money by not having to mail or fax claims to the Evidence Intake Center.

County Forest

John Cisek
Forest Administrator

Hauling of harvested wood products continued as road bans were lifted. Three sales will be closed out when final payments are made. Spring and summer are generally slow in terms of harvesting on the county forest due to soft ground conditions and oak wilt restrictions.

A timber sale bid opening is tentatively scheduled for this summer. Location of sales are to be determined. Our DNR Liason forester provided 103 % of the hours committed to Barron county this fiscal year to date.

Barron County will be the subject of a certification audit this summer. SFI (Sustainable Forestry Initiative) and FSC (Forest Stewardship Council), the two certifying bodies in Wisconsin will be visiting Barron county to review select timber sales on the county forest.

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Finance

Jodi Busch Finance Director

We are winding up the audit season in the Barron County Finance Department. CliftonLarsonAllen was onsite from April 22nd through May 10th to audit the Financials for 2018. Due to efficiencies and increased audit prep by the Finance Department, CLA was able to shave off a full week of their onsite field work this year. An important component of these efficiencies was a new portal provided by CLA that was used to upload most of the data. By having almost all documents organized and in electronic format, it is much easier for the auditors to weed through our records. Areas of focus included auditing various accounts in all Barron County funds, grant testing, fixed assets, payroll, treasurer's cash and investments.

Even though CLA's onsite visit is completed, the audit continues, with CLA compiling our Financial Statements and preparing reports to be filed with the State and Federal Governments. Once the compilation of the data is completed, drafts of

the Financial Statements will be sent to Barron County for our review. When our review is completed, reports will be filed and the final Financial Statements will be printed. The final deadline for completion is July 31st.

Once the Financial Statements are released, they are sent to a variety of agencies and borrowers that service Barron County. These Statements affect grant funding, bond ratings, interest rates, and bonding, so it is extremely important that we have as clean of an audit as possible.

As we finalize the audit, our focus will now switch to the 2020 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.

County Clerk

DeeAnn Cook County Clerk

UPCOMING ELECTION SCHEDULE FOR 2020:

- Spring Primary - Tuesday, February 18, 2020
- Spring General - Tuesday, April 7, 2020
- Partisan Primary - Tuesday, August 11, 2020
- Fall General - Tuesday, November 2, 2020

With no more elections on the schedule for the rest of 2019, we take this time to try to catch up on things such as filing, purging of outdated materials, general housekeeping and brainstorming to come up with new and more efficient ways of doing things. One thing we are currently researching is going paperless for agendas and minutes. The concept is on the agenda for discussion at my conference so I can get an idea of what other counties are or are not doing. We will also seek the opinion of our legal counsel before a final decision is made. I've been assured by IT that the documents are safe in LaserFiche and can be accessed for years and years to come in LaserFiche and/or on our county website.

We are entering our busiest season for marriage licenses but the numbers are already behind for 2019. At this rate, we will see a decrease in the number of licenses issued again this year. 2018 was the lowest number issued in the past many years.

Marriage Licenses Issued

| Year | # Issued | Year | # Issued | Year | # Issued |
|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|
| 2002 | 300 | 2008 | 302 | 2014 | 286 |
| 2003 | 342 | 2009 | 278 | 2015 | 322 |
| 2004 | 349 | 2010 | 305 | 2016 | 314 |
| 2005 | 293 | 2011 | 316 | 2017 | 304 |
| 2006 | 333 | 2012 | 308 | 2018 | 272 |
| 2007 | 282 | 2013 | 300 | | |