



Department Updates

July 2016

Circuit Court

Judge James Babler

The Circuit Court has recently updated the photos of Judges which hang on the wall of the Justice Center stairwell. The project of gathering photos and/or portraits of judges who have served Barron County was begun by Judge Edward Brunner many years ago. The portraits originally hung in the old courthouse and were reframed and matted after the courts moved to the new Justice Center.

Most recently with the retirement of Judges Timothy Doyle and James Babbitt, I found out first hand how time consuming and difficult it was to obtain photos of even recently retired judges and getting those matted and framed. Due to the fact that the same framing material was still available, the judges decided to add the current sitting judges to the portrait gallery. Consequently, five new photos have been added to the stairwell wall. The next time you are in the Justice

Center, please take time to view the arrangement.

We are still missing photos or portraits of the following judges who have served Barron County: Francis Finley (1869), William P. Swift (1882), and H.G. Ellsworth (1891). If you have any information on photographs or portraits of those judges, please let me know so we can try to complete the gallery.

Register of Deeds

Margo Katterhagen Register of Deeds

We are in the final stages of getting our real estate records scanned and available online!! It has been a long process with many, many hurdles!! Once the final issues are resolved, Barron County will be back scanned and re-dacted to 1935!

Not only will this relieve our old books from the stress of being cop-

ied....but we'll actually have a digital backup of these records! Another big step for the Register of Deeds office is we are finally going to have statewide issuance of birth records starting January 1, 2017. Currently we are working out the details with the State Vital Records office as they want to use the application process as the way to get the older records in the system instead of hiring a company to come in

and do the work. If they "get their way", we will have people potentially coming to the counter, filling out an application and then having to wait 15 to 30 minutes, while the State Vital Records Department inputs their birth information into the system, so we can print from the computer.

So.....basically we are two steps forward, with one step back!

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Medical Examiner

Mary A. Ricci, Medical Examiner

	2nd Quarter Cases									Cremation Permits	Death Certificates
		M	Fe	Natural	Suicide	Homicide	Accident	Pending	Autopsy		
2016	115	49	66	100	1	1	11	1	2	85	32
2015	105	51	54	96	1	0	8	0	0	78	25
2014	85	49	49	90	0	1	3	0	3	59	15

Land Services

Year to Date Sanitary Permits

- 69 Conventional Systems
- 22 Mound Systems
- 16 Holding Tanks
- 4 At-Grades
- 1 Pre-Treatment
- 73 Systems Installed
- 88 Soil Tests Review

Rural Fire Numbers

- 43 New Numbers
- 8 Replacements

GIS

Our ongoing effort to digitize Zoning permit and hearing documents has made great progress this year thanks to Wisconsin Land Information Program grant funding which allowed our department to hire a temporary staff person for this project. Since mid-April, over 12,000 documents have been scanned and indexed, adding 7 towns to the completed inventory. To date, 23,000+ documents, indexed to 7,700+ tax parcels in 20 municipalities, are available 24/7 via the Barron County GIS website. We anticipate this project will be completed in 2016.

A digital edition of survey documents on file with the County Surveyor has also been available for many years on the GIS website and is updated continually. In 2016, 71 documents have been added to this catalog.

Land Records Modernization projects such as these have resulted in more efficient access for staff and the public, requiring less staff time needed to locate information, and also create an archive of the records.

Our department has reviewed 63 land divisions during the first 6 months of 2016. So far, 157 parcel alterations/additions have been made for next year's assessment roll due to these land divisions. The updated parcel boundaries are incorporated into county GIS parcel layer weekly and onto the public GIS website at least once a month to provide more up-to-date mapping for staff and the public. Staff also continues to update existing parcel mapping based on more accurate survey control throughout the county.

Integration of the public GIS website and assessment/tax software web portal has been completed and appears to be working well.

Soil & Water Conservation

Staff completed our Soil Erosion Transect and found that 26% of the Corn and Soybeans were planted with No-till methods. This is up from 17% in 2015. No-till is an agricultural technique which increases the amount of water that infiltrates into the soil and increases organic matter retention and cycling of nutrients in the soil. The reduction in soil erosion can be upwards of 90%.

Cover crops are a popular and emerging conservation practice that many farmers have recently started utilizing on their farms. The benefits of cover crops are impressive - cover crops can reduce soil erosion, add nitrogen through fixation (leguminous cover crops), combat weeds, cycle excess nutrients not utilized by the previous crop, and break disease cycles. Additionally, cover crops improve soil quality through increased porosity (reduced compaction), soil organic matter, water holding capacity, beneficial bacteria and insects. We have an incentive payment available to encourage adoption of cover crops. The payment is \$25 per acre with a maximum of 40 acres.

We have completed 2 grassed waterways and have 2 more planned for this year.

We have completed a barnyard runoff system and have 3 others planned for completion this year. The numbers of farms with barnyard runoff have decreased dramatically in the last 30 years through conservation projects and changes in farm management.

One idle manure storage system has been properly abandoned and 2 other are planned for fall.

A large gully protection system has been completed on Sand Lake in conjunction with the Sand Lake Protection District. This will eliminate a considerable source of sediment to the lake.