



# Department Updates

Barron County

March / April 2014

## Circuit Court

**Judge James Babler**  
**Circuit Court Judge, Br 1**

\$19,000,000 budget with a final cost of about \$18,500,000.

hearings for the three Judges and a Family Court Commissioner within the facility.

### Justice Center is 10 years old

It is hard to believe that the Barron County Justice Center is 10 years old! As many of you will remember, the old Barron County Jail was too small and was unsafe for prisoners and staff. Additionally, the County was under pressure from the State to build a new jail and the County was spending more than \$600,000 per year to house inmates in other county jails.

The Justice Center features many innovative designs, including: geothermal heating and cooling; video visitation of prisoners; and a staff efficient jail design, to name a few. It is a wonderful, safe facility and is the envy of many other Counties.

This has resulted in moving Judges between courtrooms frequently (even within the same day), to accommodate the types of cases scheduled. This process is inefficient and confusing to litigants and staff alike. However, even with our best efforts, there are 35 days per year when one of the Circuit Judges has no courtroom to conduct hearings.

The County spent six years planning for the Justice Center. Initial construction began in the fall of 2002 and opened on April 19, 2004. The project was completed ahead of schedule and under the

While the building was designed to accommodate increased jail populations, it was built with space for only two full-time Judges and a part-time Family Court Commissioner. In 2008, the legislature added a third branch or full-time Judge for Barron County. Since then we have worked very hard to schedule jury trials, court trials and other

A permanent solution for court space is necessary to enable the Judges and Family Court Commissioner to better serve the public and to dispose of cases more quickly.

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## Register of Deeds

**Margo Katterhagen,**  
**Register of Deeds**

The ROD office is very excited with the new public record law (deed scam) that Governor Scott Walker signed on Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>.

in deed-processing schemes that target new and existing homeowners.

Homeowners receive official-looking notices recommending they obtain a deed and property profile to their home in order to confirm their ownership in the property — for a fee that is anywhere between

\$60 to \$90, when they can obtain a copy through our office for a minimal fee of \$2 or \$3, depending on the number of pages.

The new law details certain requirements so these letters are more easily identified as unnecessary.

Over the past few years, there has been a significant increase



## Finance

### Jodi Busch, Lead Fiscal Coordinator

Spring time is audit time in the Finance Department. In addition to daily duties, staff has been very busy reconciling accounts and closing out 2013. The highway audit fieldwork was conducted the week of March 24<sup>th</sup>. Because of the excessive snow events in 2013, there was concern of a significant deficit in their financial statements for year-end. This would result in a transfer of unassigned fund balance from the General Fund. We are very pleased to report the Highway Department generated a department-wide surplus of \$720.00 for 2013! While this may not seem noteworthy, to generate any gain with the obstacles that our win-

ter weather has caused in the past year is quite remarkable.

The county-wide audit will commence on April 28<sup>th</sup>. We contract with external auditors, CliftonLarsonAllen, who will be onsite for 3-4 weeks conducting fieldwork, testing internal controls, and reviewing grant activity. Financial statements will be developed, compiled and submitted to various agencies with a deadline of July 31<sup>st</sup>. 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 rating helps our bond rating as well as grant eligibility.

Standard & Poor's recently required Barron County to complete a review to determine an updated credit rating. This rating is important in that it evaluates the creditworthiness or credit risk of an entity. The higher the rating, the higher the credit quality, which can be beneficial in getting better interest rates with bond issues or other financial obligations. We are very pleased to report that we were recently upgraded from a AA- to a AA rating, which means that our capacity to meet our financial commitments is very strong. The highest rating that can be received is AAA.

## County Clerk

### DeeAnn Cook, County Clerk

Special thanks for their years of service and dedication to departing board members Pam Fall, Lee Romsos, Mark Rogstad, Karla Nevin, Bill Koepp and Stacy Neuman. Welcome to newly elected board members Jim Gores, Terry Lee, Travis Turner and returning member, John Hardin; plus Kay Curtin and Phil Duecker who won as registered write in candidates. Congratulations to the rest of the returning board members on their reelection. All board members will be

sworn in on April 15, 2014 by Honorable Judge James Babler then they will elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Second Vice Chair and Highway Committee.

The April 1, 2014 Spring Election went smoothly and the Municipal Clerks and Poll Workers did their usual good job. Special thanks to Vonnie Ritchie, Jeff and Pam French and Julie Henningsen who volunteer their time and come in to help Jessica and I take in election results. Even though there were many write in votes to count due to several vacant seats

in various races throughout the county, the results came in quite quickly. Voter turnout was relatively low; approximately 7% of eligible voters and 10% of registered voters went to the polls. As usual, a much larger turnout is expected for the fall elections.

## Clerk of Courts

### Sharon Millermon, Clerk of Court

I am very pleased to announce the courts and clerk of circuit court have been recently recognized in state and national publications through Barron County's monthly community outreach articles published in the local Barron County newspapers. The authors of these monthly articles are: Judge James Babler, Judge J. M. Bitney, Judge Maureen Boyle, Clerk of Circuit Court Sharon Millermon and Register in Probate Deanne Alsbury. In March, 2014 this initiative was highlighted in an arti-

cle published in The Justice Management Institute entitled, "Innovative Ways of Connecting Courts with the Community."

Sharon Millermon recently had her February community outreach article published in The Third Branch which is a quarterly publication of the Director of State Courts Office, providing news of interest to the Wisconsin Court System. The headline is, "As part of an ongoing public education effort, Barron County Clerk of Circuit Court Sharon Millermon offers guidelines on what constitutes

legal information and legal advice." If you didn't read it in one of the local newspapers, it can be viewed at: <http://www.wicourts.gov/news/thirdbranch/index.htm>

Our goal is the articles will provide an avenue to reach out to the public and diligently inform it of the processes and policies of the court and, therein, highlighting the importance of the court system as an independent branch of the government while also remaining neutral and non-political.

# Human Resources

Rachael Richie, HR Director

<b><u>New/Replacement Positions</u></b>				
<b><u>Position Title</u></b>	<b><u>Office/Department</u></b>	<b><u>Incumbent</u></b>	<b><u>Date Filled</u></b>	<b><u>New/Replacement</u></b>
Part-time Civilian Correction Officer	Sheriff	Chris Allen	3/18/14	Replacement
Economic Support Specialist	Health & Human Services	Michelle Marshall	3/24/14	Replacement
Assistant Clerk of Courts	Clerk of Courts	Rochele Winger	3/24/14	Replacement
Part-time Civilian Correction Officer	Sheriff	Francis Chenyi	3/31/14	Replacement
Economic Support Specialist	Health & Human Services	Mee Vang	4/7/14	Replacement
Deputy Medical Examiner	Medical Examiner	Pam Ambrozaitis	4/8/14	Replacement
Deputy Medical Examiner	Medical Examiner	Jeff White	4/10/14	Replacement
<b><u>Internal Changes</u></b>				
Economic Support Program Manager	Health & Human Services	Bonnie Roemhild		2/24/14
Lead Economic Support Specialist	Health & Human Services	Dayna Stellrecht		3/10/14
Interim Health & Human Services Director	Health & Human Services	Stacey Frolik		4/3/14

- Employees have completed the Job Description Questionnaire (JDQ) as the initial step in the wage study process. Carlson Dettmann will be onsite to meet with department heads in early May.

## Office on Aging / Aging & Disability Resource Center

**Leslie Fijalkiewicz, Director**

It's hard to believe nearly 2 months have passed since Char's retirement, and as expected, it's been quite a ride! After several retirements and a few people who moved within the department, we are now fully staffed in the multi-county ADRC and Barron County Office on Aging. We have filled eight professional positions since December 2013, all but two resulting from retirements!

Volunteer Services of Barron County is a non-profit organization that has been co-located with our agency for three years. Our collaborations have really benefitted our mutual customers. The Program Director for this agency is retiring at the

end of April and the Volunteer Services Board of Directors has hired the new Director. Her name is Donna Bachowski, and if the name looks familiar it is because she is married to Scott Bachowski, the Veterans Service Officer.

In the last two months we have submitted proposals for three different grants and have already been awarded one! This particular grant is for marketing the Aging & Disability Resource Center over the next year. It's part of a statewide effort to make the public more aware of what an ADRC is and what we do. The ads will be on all of our local radio stations over the next year. In addition, Lake 7 Theatres and the Spooner Theatre will be showing ADRC ads on their screen before movies. Eau Claire County

also received the grant so our folks will be seeing ads on the television too!

We are expecting to hear back within the next week or two about our other grant proposals. One was for expanding services in the Elderly Nutrition Program, and another was to fund a full-time Dementia Care Specialist position.

Before Charlene left, she gave me her secret to success...I use that Magic 8 Ball regularly and it hasn't steered me wrong!

# Health & Human Services

## Stacey Frolik, Youth & Family Services Program Manager

### Public Health

**Know Your Numbers** event sponsored by area Health Care Providers in collaboration with THRIVE Barron County.

May 13, 2014 6am-9 am

Cumberland Healthcare

May 14, 2014 6am-9am

Cumberland Healthcare and

Lakeview Medical Center

May 15, 2014 6am-9am

Lakeview Medical Center and

Mayo Clinic (Barron)

May 16, 2014 6am-9am

Mayo Clinic (Rice Lake)

pre-registration required for Lakeview Medical Center events

([www.lakeviewmedical.com](http://www.lakeviewmedical.com))

THRIVE Barron County Health Fair will be held May 20, 2014 from 4-5:30 pm at the Barron County Government Center at 5:30 pm, there will be a Diabetes Academy featuring Celebrity Chef Dana Herbert (winner of the Cake Boss). Pre-registration is required.

### Youth and Family Services

Positive Action Committee (PAC) continues to address strategies to foster a

healthy work environment within DHHS. This committee is comprised of staff from each unit within the department.

PATHS Pilot Project is a collaborative grant opportunity (Barron, Chippewa, Dunn, Polk, Pepin, and Pierce) targeting vulnerable youth ages 14-18 years old in substitute care. Funding will focus on 5 domains; permanent connections, academics, training and employment, housing, and social/emotional well being. Funding could be at the level of \$1 million per year for 5 years. Grant application must be submitted on/before April 18, 2014.

### Behavioral Health/APS/CSP

IPS-SE (Individual Placement and Support - Supported Employment) program review will be taking place April 21-April 22, 2014.

Since January 1, 2014 the Community Services Program (CSP) has had five discharges of persons from services whom have meet recovery goals that would allow them to depart the public mental health services system in favor of services in the private sector.

Emergency Mental Health Detentions from January-March, 2014 we had 34 Emergency Detentions compared to

January-March, 2013 there were 39. In March, we identified there had been a lot of distress seemingly in the first quarter however we have responded with services that have allowed citizens to stay safely in the community.

### Economic Support Services

Barron County DHHS will undergo an Energy Assistance audit in early May 2014. Processing of applications that are received from the Marketplace continues. The State did extend the application deadline to May 30, 2014 under special circumstances. These circumstances are as follows:

- Enrollment errors, such as enrollment information not being transmitted from the Federally-Facilitated Marketplace (FFM) to the issuer;
- Exceptional circumstances, specifically those related to natural disasters or medical emergencies; or
- Misrepresentation or misconduct by a Navigator, Certified Application Counselor, agent/broker or other assister.