



Department Updates

November 2016

Veterans Service Office

Scott Bachowski
Veterans Service Officer

County Veterans Service Officers Complete Their Semi-Annual Accreditation Training

The County Veterans Service Officers Association of Wisconsin (CVSOA-WI) met in Green Lake, WI the first week of October to attend a training and business conference.

These conferences are held twice per year as continuing education in order to maintain accreditation with multiple national Veterans Service Organizations. For CVSOs and their staff these classes are crucial in their work as advocates for veterans and their families.

This conference included senior members of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) including Mr. Rob Reynolds, Under Secretary of

the Veterans Benefits Administration, Washington DC; Mr. Duane Honeycutt, Director of the Veterans Benefits Administration, Milwaukee VA Regional Office; claims office personnel from DAV, VFW, PVA, WDVA, and several other VA subject matter experts. Training was given on areas of change and technology usage within the VA such as compensation, pension, information technology advancements, suicide prevention, VA health care, as well as VA law and appeals processes. Additional classes included non-VA programs such as ethics, Can Do Canines (support dogs), Helmets to Hard Hats & the WI Carpentry Training Center (employment/training), and Upward Bound (educational support).

The success of the offices that operate in all 72 counties is dependent on staying current

with federal and state laws, regulations, and statutes. It is through this training and the hard work of our CVSOs that Wisconsin has seen a nearly 50% increase in VA benefits, from \$1.8 billion to \$2.7 billion, in just five years. Benefits that include, but are not limited to, disability compensation, pension, education benefits, home loans, and surviving spouse benefits. Additionally, almost 9,000 more veterans were receiving VA health care in 2015 compared to 2010.

As we move into a new year, the CVSO Association of Wisconsin looks forward to working with all stakeholders to support The ZERO Veteran Suicide Initiative and strengthen awareness of veterans' benefits and CVSO offices around the state through a collaborative marketing campaign.

Inside this issue:

Veterans 1

Register of Deeds 1

County Clerk 2

Forestry 2

Highway 3

Register of Deeds

Margo Katterhagen
Register of Deeds

I know that we sound like a broken record but scanning is good!!

With the more documents we scan in, the more external users we entice which equals more revenue being generated!

We have received an estimate

to scan in all of our books for numerous reasons. First - it keeps the old books from being opened repeatedly; second - as stated above - the more documents we have available to purchase online, the more revenue we generate and third - we'd have an electronic backup of all of our documents!

Statewide Issuance is coming soon! On January 3, 2017 we will have the ability to issue vital records from anywhere in the State of Wisconsin. Some vital records may have an estimated 20 minute wait time, but it will still be faster than driving to the county where their record currently resides and/or having to mail in an application.

DeeAnn Cook County Clerk

Huge shout out to our municipal clerks and poll workers for their phenomenal job at the November 8, 2016 General Election where 22,926 voters cast ballots in Barron County. There were 123 more votes cast than at the 2012 Presidential Election and 129 less than the 2008 Presidential Election. For our county, approximately 63% of eligible voters and 86% of registered voters turned out. Results from polling places started coming in around 8:40 pm and were all in and posted to our website by 10:30 pm. Special thanks to Vonnie Ritchie, Margo Katterhagen, Jeff French and Pam French for helping Jess Hodek and I take in election results and Jeff Sirek who uploaded our results remotely to the Barron County

website so people at home could watch them come in.

In addition to the races for President, US Senator, Representative in Congress, Representative to the Assembly, District Attorney, County Clerk, County Treasurer and Register of Deeds there were municipal referenda questions in the Towns of Doyle and Dovre and two school referenda questions for the Turtle Lake School District. After every general election, WEC randomly draws polling places to conduct a complete audit of the election. Normally, at least one of our municipalities gets randomly drawn for the audit but none have been informed as of today. Whoever gets drawn will need to hand count every ballot in 2 or 3 specific races to ensure that the voting equipment counted

accurately and that hand count paper ballots were counted correctly. While it is rather time consuming to conduct an audit, it is a very good way to prove the integrity of our election process and equipment and the results can be used to increase voter confidence.

The next election is a Spring Primary that is set for February 21, 2017. Occasionally, a primary is not necessary for spring elections but there is a high likelihood this year in the Superintendent of Public Instruction race. There will be a Spring Election on April 4, 2017 where several municipal and school level contests will be on the ballot in addition to the state level races.



Forestry

John Cisek County Forester

- Timber Sale Activity
Despite the wet summer a recent dry spell has allowed one sale to start up. Contracts were extended for one year. Currently there are two active timber sales on the County Forest.
- The Shiner Lake sale (Tract # 5-2014 / # 355) was recently reopened and is progressing. The higher ground is expected to be completed this fall. Lower wetter portions of the sale will require frozen ground.
- Lumbering Hall of Fame

A second smaller pier is being built and financed with Department of Natural Resources, Barron Countys 2015 County Conservation Grant monies and a Federal Shoreland Improvement Grant. We are waiting on approval from the Federal Shoreland Improvement Grant program.

- The 2016-2017 Forestry Accomplishment and Workplan was recently approved by the Property Committee and sent to full county board for approval. Approval of the Workplan allows for the application of the County Forest Administrators Grant.
- The WCFA (Wis. County Forest

Association) Annual Meeting was held in Schofield, Wisconsin on September 29th and 30th. Highlights included the final address to the Association by departing Chief Forester Paul DeLong.

- Bill Schradle was re-elected to the WCFA Board of Directors for our area.
- The GIS Department has helped in creating a new layer to assist us in tracking the installation of property boundaries.

Highway Department

Mark Servi Highway Commissioner

We have had an extremely productive construction season at the Highway Department. Many projects were completed on the County Highway System, the State System and the Local System. At times it seemed like we were overwhelmed due to the impact of the rain. But it looks like we will be wrapping up our work before the ground gets hard and we move into Winter Maintenance Mode.

Our crew really took on the challenge of the projects and worked together to get them done. The fact that we had so much work speaks to their ability to produce quality projects cost effectively. We have many Towns that come to us to perform all their projects – they know what they get when we do a project for them. By working

together we can all gain the benefits that come with having a strong crew that is equipped with the right equipment to do most any road project we are ask to perform. I would stack this crew up against any other county operation. They are a hard working, very skilled group that Barron County is fortunate to have.

There were too many projects completed to mention them all. We worked on gravel hauls, crack filling and chip sealing, many paving projects, miles of rut filling, construction projects and culvert projects for the towns, shouldering and mowing/brush removal on County Highway Right of Way. Some of the more challenging ones included the Rifle Range construction in Maple Plain and the paving at the Cumberland Sewage Treatment Plant.

We also have a major reconstruction project in progress on CTH A in Dovre and Sioux Creek Townships. This project is funded by the Federal Surface Transportation Program and County Funds. The project was let and constructed by a contractor through WISDOT. There was much impact to this project due to the unusually wet construction season and as a result the project will not be completed until next year. Most of the project has at least one layer of asphalt on it, but there is a section near 24th Street that will remain a gravel surface through the winter. The gravel is very wet and unstable, and paving it would only result in pavement failure. CTH A will be open to travel as soon as the guard rail and signing is in place. Work to complete the project will be scheduled as weather allows next year.