



BARRON COUNTY DEPARTMENT UPDATES

November / December 2011

Veterans Service Office

Scott Bachowski
Veterans Service Officer

The Veterans Day program at the Northern Veterans Memorial Cemetery was once again an impressive ceremony. We had several Barron County Veterans participate in this year's program to include the Assistant Veterans Service Officer, Dawn Anderson. Her speech focused on the importance and significance of the female veteran. She did a great job and we sure are proud of her efforts.

In November, we hosted a "U Earned It" event; we had approximately 30 veterans and spouses attend this event. Dawn and I presented a broad overview of the services the Veterans Service Office provides to our Barron County Community. The event was very successful, as we drew new veterans into our office to get them the veterans benefits they earned. It is an event that we will certainly continue in the future.

Effective December 1, 2011, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs is enacting a moratorium on its primary mortgage loan program, home improvement loan program

and personal loan program that provide loans to qualifying state veterans. The moratorium will last indefinitely.

It's official, military and federal civilian retirees, survivor benefit annuitants, disabled veterans and Social Security recipients will see a 3.6 percent cost-of-living adjustment in January, their first since 2009. The 3.6% COLA will be effective December 1st and will be reflected in January retired pay, SBP, Social Security, and VA disability compensation checks.

Nothing evokes such strong emotion as seeing "Old Glory" displayed at a ceremony honoring a great event, draped over a coffin as a sign of mourning a hero or loved one or displayed on your or your neighbor's property. The flag symbolizes our love and pride we have as a nation and is a poignant reminder of America's greatness and our fortune to live in a country which values freedom above all else. Thus, we all must make certain the United States Flag is displayed with the greatest respect and dignity. All too often in my travels through Barron County, I see flags that are no longer fit for display. Title 4 of

the United States Code, Chapter 1, 8(k); states "The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning." Thus, I ask my fellow Barron County citizens to make sure the flag you fly on your property is fit for proper display and if you notice your neighbor's flag is unfit, gently remind them of this fact. A torn flag can be repaired, preferably by a professional or someone skilled in mending. A flag that is faded or tattered beyond repair should be replaced. The Flag Code suggests that, "when a flag has served its useful purpose, it should be destroyed, preferably by burning." For individual citizens, this should be done discreetly so the act of destruction is not perceived as a protest or desecration. Many American Legion Posts conduct Disposal of Unserviceable Flag Ceremonies on 14 June, Flag Day. This ceremony creates a particularly dignified and solemn occasion for the retirement of unserviceable flags. The Barron County Veterans Service Office will also accept flags that are unfit for display.



Inside this issue:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Clerk of Court | 2 |
| Finance | 2 |
| Health & Human Services | 3 |
| County Clerk | 3 |
| ADRC/Office on Aging | 4 |
| Treasurer | 4 |
| Human Resources | 5 |
| Administration | 5 |



Clerk of Court

Sharon Millermon Clerk of Court

Recently 1,700 Barron County residents' names were received from the Department of Transportation to fulfill the upcoming 2012 jury year. Prior to July 1, 1997, half of prospective jurors were selected from the voter's registration and the other half from a list created by the Department of Transportation. With the law change in 1997 and beginning in 1998, all prospective jurors are now selected from a random list created by the Department of Transportation

representing all ages, gender and race of Barron County's population.

After this list is obtained from the Department of Transportation, questionnaires are sent out to all prospective jurors. When returned, data is entered into the jury application. Each and every questionnaire is accounted for and follow up is given to those that fail to respond. An annual mandatory State report is prepared comparing Barron County's annual jury pool to the US census 2009 population estimates to ensure that litigants/defendants are receiving an

accurate representation of the population of Barron County and a jury of one's peers.

Often residents summoned for jury duty are reluctant to serve, but after completion of their jury duty service have many positive comments. One juror commented, "I am very impressed with how things are run and will no longer dread the words "jury duty".



Finance

Jodi Busch Lead Fiscal Coordinator

November 15th, the Barron County Board of Supervisors set the 2012 budget at \$17,571,099. This amount represents a 2% increase or \$343,782 above the 2011 budget of \$17,227,317. Also included in the budget was the decision to use fund balance to build a new salt/storage shed at the Highway Department.

With the completion of the budget, now the Finance Department focus will be shifted toward the year end. Our auditing firm, LarsonAllen, will be onsite for a few days in December to gather preliminary year-end information to prepare for the audit in 2012. As a result, we are contacting

offices in regards to 2011 Fixed Asset purchases, as well as updating departmental Internal Control procedures.

Due to shifts in duties in the Finance Department over the last couple of years, following is an update of who is specializing in various areas which provide support to county offices:

Accounts Payable –
Sue Williams, Barb Elliott (backup)

W-9's, New Vendor Setup –
Sue Williams, Barb Elliott (backup)

Accounts Receivable –
Barb Elliott, Heidi Syvinski (backup)

Fixed Assets –
Barb Elliott, Jodi Busch (backup)

Interdepartmental Journal Entries –
Barb Elliott

Payroll –
Charla Kucko, Barb Elliott (backup)

DHHS Payroll –
Kathy Hanson, Charla Kucko (backup)

Highway –
Sally Ellison

DHHS Financial –
Heidi Syvinski, Kathy Hanson, Sue Williams

Happy Holidays!



Health & Human Services

Judy Demers, Director

Upon the resignation of Kaye Thompson, Health Officer, Denise Olson, Public Health Nurse, has been appointed as Interim Health Officer. Recruitment is underway for a permanent replacement. The recruitment closes on December 2, 2011. It is hoped to have a replacement by January 1, 2012.

The physical setting for the call/change center for Income Maintenance is under development on third floor. Three workstations are being set up in a common location where calls will be received for the 10-county consortium.

The call/change center will be piloted in several locations through out the state beginning 12-1-11, and it will go live statewide on 1-1-12. At present, seven of the 10 counties in the consortium intend to provide call/change center functions. The remaining three counties intend to purchase the service from the other counties.

Aurora Residential has been awarded the contract to provide crisis stabilization services for those individuals experiencing a mental health crisis who are at risk of hospitalization, or for those individuals who need stabi-

lization after hospitalization before being transitioned back to the community. A facility located near Chippewa Falls is being developed. It is hoped that the facility will be operational by 4-1-12. Development of this service has been a joint effort of several counties in the Western Region including Chippewa, Eau Claire, Pierce, Polk, Pepin, Buffalo, and Barron.



County Clerk

DeeAnn Cook County Clerk

2012 will be a big election year starting with County Board Supervisor races in the Spring Election. Candidates for the County Board Supervisory race should file their Campaign Registration Statement (GAB-1) in the County Clerk's office before circulating nomination papers or spending/collecting any funds. December 1, 2011 is the first day nomination papers can be circulated. 20-100 signatures are required and signers must reside within the supervisory district. It is recommended to get more than the minimum (20) in case any signatures are deemed not valid. Maps for every supervisory district are available on the county website or a hard

copy can be purchased at Land Information. The Declaration of Candidacy (GAB-162), Campaign Registration Statement (GAB-1) and Nomination Papers (GAB-169) all **must** be filed in the County Clerk's office by 5 P.M. on January 3, 2012 in order for a candidate's name to appear on the ballot.

Important! Please note: Notification of Non-Candidacy (GAB-163) must be filed if an incumbent is not seeking re-election no later than December 23, 2011. Failure to file will force an extension of the nomination deadline by 72 hours for that supervisory district for all candidates except the incumbent.

We had record attendance at our BCMC meeting late in October. There are many changes in the works for

elections. We will be ordering supplies as a group to save funds. Another cooperative effort of our group will be designating a Special Registration Deputy at every high school for the purpose of registering eligible voters. The SRD will need to be appointed then trained. Most schools have already responded with a suggestion for SRD. Logistics of training will be worked out soon.

Deputy County Clerk, Jennifer Horstman, has accepted a position in the private sector and her last day was Nov. 17. We wish her the very best in her new endeavor. Recruitment has begun for her replacement.



ADRC / Office on Aging

Charlene Oftedahl, Director

The Benefit Specialists in the ADRC have been extremely busy during this Annual Election Period for Medicare Part C (Advantage Plans) and Part D (prescription drugs). It is important for people to evaluate their current coverage. Plans can change, including the drugs covered, premium amounts and deductibles. And entire plans can be dropped, no longer available for Barron County residents. Also individuals' needs change – new drugs, new health concerns, etc. Our Elderly Benefit Specialists Kim Gogan and Mary Simpson participated on a committee to create a model volunteer program and training curriculum that is gradually

being adopted statewide. Because of their excellent work, our ADRC received a \$6,000 award from the State Health Insurance Assistance Program. Currently we have 8 trained volunteers who are taking appointments at senior centers and at the ADRC, making it possible for many more people to receive help than would otherwise be feasible.

The Benefit Specialists are also recruiting volunteers for the national program called Tax Counseling for the Elderly. Give them a call at 537-6225 if you are interested in attending the training in January provided by the IRS and AARP. There are over 600 volunteers statewide who assist seniors with preparing simple fed-

eral and state tax returns, including Homestead Credit returns.

Emergency Food Packs are being distributed to Meals-On-Wheels recipients to be available for use if meal delivery is impossible due to bad weather conditions. Volunteer groups like the Chetek Snowflyers assemble the food packs which contain the nutritional equivalent of two meals. Did you know that several Barron County employees give up their lunch period to take turns on two MOW delivery routes on Mondays here in the City of Barron?



Treasurer's Office

Vonnie Ritchie, Treasurer

Tax Deed

The Tax Deed property sale was held on November 8, 2011, at the Justice Center. There were 21 bidders registered. Five parcels were sold and the new owners have made their final payment. We still own 23 lots in Cumberland that can be purchased here in the Treasurer's office. Lots 5 and 6 of Sunset Ridge in the City of Rice Lake were sold on October 31, 2011. We still own 10 lots in the Sunset Ridge plat in Rice Lake which are listed with Alliance Realty along with the lot at 5 N Main Street in Rice Lake that is listed with Jenkins Realty. If you would like the details on any of these properties, please contact my office.

The first phase of the tax deed action has begun on the 2008 delinquent taxes. The formal action will be filed and published in January. The total 2008 delinquent taxes were \$276,558 as of December 1, 2011.

2012 Real Estate Taxes

Our annual Municipal Treasurer Tax Collection Training will be held on December 8, 2011, in the auditorium. This is Paul Streif's 50th year of collecting taxes for the Town of Vance Creek and has seen many changes in the process. Paul, we appreciate your attention to detail and dedicated service to the taxpayers.

Have a
Safe &
Happy
Holiday
Season!



Human Resources

New / Replacement Positions

| <u>Position Title</u> | <u>Office / Department</u> | <u>Incumbent</u> | <u>New / Replacement</u> |
|---|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| PT Civilian Correction Officer | Sheriff | Recruiting | Replacement |
| Public Health Program Manager | Health & Human Services | Recruiting | Replacement |
| Deputy County Clerk / County Board Secretary | County Clerk | Recruiting | Replacement |
| PT Clerk / Typist | Health & Human Services | Recruiting | Replacement |
| Patrol Deputy | Sheriff | Recruiting | Replacement |
| PT Civilian Communications Officer | Sheriff | Recruiting | Replacement |

- Effective in 2012, individuals applying for positions with Barron County will submit on-line applications.

Administration

Jeff French, Administrator

LCC/Extension:

September: Received an update from Chad Alberg, USDA, APHIS, pertaining to the Wisconsin Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims program. For 2011 there were 18 enrollees in approximately 13 different townships and of the 19 claims, 13 were for bear, 4 for deer and 2 for geese. Approved 2012 budget for SWCD and Extension and approved out-of-state travel for Mary Pardee to National 4-H Youth Agents Meeting in Nebraska.

There was no October or November meeting, with the next meeting schedule for December 5th at 7.30am.

Property Committee:

September: Approved budgets for Maintenance, Parks and Recreation, County Forest, Fleet Vehicles, Dams and Capital Improvement Capital Outlay Fund.

Approved removal of sidewalk on north side of Government Center, the capping for County Forest lands was discussed and referred to County Board. Directed Administrator to have an appraisal completed for the Health Building on LaSalle Avenue. This has now been completed and will be discussed with the Committee at the January 2012 meeting. The upgrade to the surveillance cameras at the Government Center was completed during the month of September.

The October meeting was postponed to 10-31 and the following pertinent agenda items were referred to the County Board for consideration, Highway Salt Storage Shed was put into the 2012 budget and the Conceal and Carry Ordinance was acted upon by the full Board. There was no November meeting.

Executive:

This Committee met on 9-7 and 9-22

and concentrated mainly on the 2012 Budget, union negotiations and other personnel items. They approved the use of an on-line job application program as the County's preferred method for receiving resumes and for individuals to apply for job openings.

October 5th: Approved process and concept for Criminal Justice Collaborating Council.

November 2nd: Most items on this agenda were referred to the full Board for consideration however; they did approve the formation of Employee/Employer discussion groups for those employees not represented by a collective bargaining agreement.

Please note that a majority of all items discussed by the Executive Committee for the September to November meetings were referred to the full Board for their consideration.