



# BARRON COUNTY DEPARTMENT UPDATES

November / December 2012

## Highway Department

### Mark Servi, Commissioner

The salt shed project has been completed with the exception of a few minor items. We have taken delivery of salt to the new building, and also have begun mixing salt-sand and placing inside the building. The ability to store a greatly increased quantity of salt over our old facility will certainly serve the county well in the coming years. Having the ability to store salt sand inside for the first time will insure that we always have access to dry salt-sand, and also means that we will not have to move piles and cover material remaining in the spring with tarps. Thanks to the County Board for making this new salt storage facility a reality.

We completed our construction and maintenance projects before the weather closed in on us. We are presently in the planning stages for next year's projects. CTH O from USH 8 south to CTH D will be repaved. This project will be broken into two phases. The section from USH 8 to CTH 00 is a federally funded project. The section from CTH 00 to CTH D is funded by Barron County. CTH P from 7<sup>th</sup> Street north to USH 8 will be widened and repaved. This is a

major sand haul route that will be used by multiple sand companies. We are currently working on road use agreements with these companies and are hopeful that these agreements will be in place soon.

Recently we held an event we call our Annual Fall Appreciation Day. We invite all of Barron County's Towns, Cities and Villages to this event. The Highway Department does a large volume of work on the local system for these units of Government. The program we presented included a session on the new DNR Wetland and Waterway General Permits for Municipalities to Construct, Reconstruct or Maintain Highways, Bridges, Arches and Culverts. We also discussed new technology and processes that we will begin utilizing at the Highway Department such as warm mix asphalt and the Safety Edge pavement shoe, which provides a margin of safety on the edge of pavements that vertical edges do not. This event was well attended and we received many positive comments.

Trains will soon be operating on a regular schedule on the Poskin to Ladysmith route, and

as needed on the Cameron to Rice Lake route. CN has been holding a series of town hall meetings as well as radio announcements to educate the public. The majority of the Poskin to Ladysmith track has not had a train on it for almost a decade. Public safety is major concern. Please help get the word out that these are now active rail corridors. At a recent rail conference where I presented, the following analogy was given: A train colliding with a car is the same as a car colliding with a soda can, from a perspective of weight. That is quite sobering.

As we enter into the winter driving season –just a few reminders: when roadway conditions are not clear pavement, do not use your cruise control. Please give plow operators room to do their work, and never pass a plow truck, you never know what is coming at you in the cloud of snow that the plow puts up. Give yourself additional time to get to your destination if the conditions are less than ideal.

We at the Highway Department wish everyone a safe and happy Holiday Season!



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## County Clerk

### DeeAnn Cook, County Clerk

22,803 voters cast ballots at the November General Election, November 6, 2012 in Barron County. Turnout was actually lower than 2008 (23,058) and 2004 (24,189). Approximately 64% of eligible voters and 85% of registered voters turned out. Results from polling places started coming in around 8:40pm and were all in by 11:15pm. After every large election, GAB ran-

domly draws polling places to conduct a complete audit of the election. This time Town of Dallas was fortunate enough to be drawn. They will need to hand count every ballot to ensure that the voting equipment counted accurately and that hand count paper ballots were counted correctly. While it is rather time consuming, it is a very good way to prove the integrity of our election process and equipment and it helps to increase voter confidence.

The next election is a Spring Primary that is set for February 19, 2013. Occasionally, a primary is not necessary for spring elections but all indications are that this time there will be enough candidates filed to force a primary at the state level. Superintendent of Public Instruction and Justice of the Supreme Court will be on the ballot in addition to several municipal level races.

## Finance

### Jodi Busch, Lead Fiscal Coordinator

The Finance Department had a very busy autumn focusing on the 2013 budget. At the November 5<sup>th</sup> County Board meeting, a County levy was set at \$17,747,703, an increase from 2012 of only \$176,604 or 1.01%. This is the smallest increase from a prior year since 1996. Soon after, levy limit worksheets were completed and sent to the DOR along with our County Apportionment calculations. Next came the setup

of the 2013 departmental budgets in our computer system. With just a few more tasks to complete, we will be ready for 2013.

In addition to preparing for the New Year, we are also ready to begin our year-end processes. CliftonLarsonAllen will be onsite the week of December 10<sup>th</sup> for their annual preliminary audit visit. By spending a few days here in December, they can take care of some of the more tedious tasks which will help streamline

the audit process when they come again in the spring. In addition to the audit, we will be starting to tie up the loose ends for 2012, which includes various projects that we will be focusing on into the New Year. From the looks of it, December promises to be a very busy month for us in the Finance Department.

Happy Holidays from all of us in the Finance Department!

## Health & Human Services

### Judy Demers, Director

Logisticare, the non-emergency medical transportation provider which replaced the county-administered system in July, 2011, has served notification of termination of their contract with the State of Wisconsin effective February 17, 2013. In its letter of termination, Logisticare cited "The failure to provide any utilization data whatsoever made it a challenge to bid this contract appropriately. Utilization is running more than twice what we anticipated and we cannot sustain the program on the amount we bid." A new RFP will be issued by the State to

procure another provider of this service. The State Department of Health Services is taking measures to ensure a smooth transition for consumers.

Three meetings have been held relevant to the termination of Cumberland Healthcare's behavioral health services effective 12-31-12. Representatives from area counties, the State Department of Health Services and area providers have been in attendance. The goal has been to develop strategies for program development to fill the gap created by the termination of these local services. Two workgroups have

been formed: one to address inpatient and crisis services and one to address outpatient services. Short term and long term plans will be developed. The larger group will reconvene early in 2013 to finalize the plans brought forth by the work groups.

Interviews are in process for the 4 Community Support Program case management positions that are replacing the contracted positions. Recruitment resulted in 46 applications. It is anticipated that a final decision will be made in early December and that the individuals selected will assume their duties in early January.



## Circuit Court

### Judge James Babler

The digital signage (information on TV monitors) in the Justice Center was upgraded last month to provide better readability and information for persons coming to the Justice Center. The digital signage provides standard information and warnings in English, Spanish and Somali, along with daily court calendars. The signage reduces the need for individuals to ask County

staff (Sheriff's reception, Clerk of Courts reception and D.A.'s reception) for information.

This signage is particularly important due to the fact that the Justice Center was designed for two Judges, and the three Judges are moving Courtrooms on a daily basis and sometimes during the day. The digital signage relieves reception staff from having to answer questions as to where an individual's

court hearing is being held, thus allowing the County staff member to continue with regular work.

We are extremely pleased with the new system implemented by the County IT Department. Please stop by to see it if you have a chance.



## Land Services Department

### David Gifford, Land Services Director

The Barron County Land Services Department has been working on a variety of projects this fall.

The Land Information division has recently added unofficial zoning and floodplain layers to the "Zoning Layers" section of the Barron County GIS website. Our spring 2012 orthophotography was also added to the site this fall, and photos for 2005, 2008, and 2010 are still available as well.

In addition, development has begun on a scanning project which will make zoning land use permit, sanitary permit, rezoning, and board of adjustment data available via the GIS website. Data will be indexed through the parcel number and viewed via pdf image hyperlink. Though the project will not be completed for many months, because records will be added as staff time allows, we antici-

pate that the public will be able to begin viewing these records within the next month.

Our office continues to make progress on the projects outlined in the Barron County Land Records Modernization Plan. These projects, such as the GIS website and those additions described above, are designed to allow easier, enhanced access to the public records created and stored at the county.

The Soil & Water Conservation division is working on completing our 2012 cost share projects, finalizing plans for the 2013 program sign-up and will be publishing our farm newsletter shortly. Traci Petersen is working on the year-end assessment of existing gravel pits and, in conjunction with Zoning, preparing annual permit applications for 2013.

Each year, our tree program provides

native trees and shrubs to County residents at cost. Sales will begin January 2<sup>nd</sup>; contact Justin Everson at extension 6245 to order.

The Zoning division is wrapping the 2012 construction year. This year, sanitary permits are down slightly with 186 so far, compared to 200 for 2011. Land use permits remained stable with 294 for 2012 and 296 in 2011, as did rezoning hearings: 22 in 2012 to 21 in 2011. In 2012, Board of Adjustment hearings increased from 27 last year to 36. Permit and hearing numbers are dependent on the economy. From 2006 to 2010, there was an annual decrease of approximately 20%. With the relative stability of the past two years, our numbers have leveled off and we hope for a steady increase in 2013.



## Office on Aging / Aging & Disability Resource Center

### Charlene Oftedahl, Director

Consider a holiday gift that gives in many ways. Gift certificates for meals are available to share with friends and relatives who receive meals-on-wheels or enjoy lunch at Senior Dining locations throughout the county. Or how about making a donation to a worthwhile program, such as Daybreak, in memory of, or in honor of a loved one? Daybreak is a daytime social program for persons with memory loss and confusion. It provides some respite for family caregivers. Consider a raffle ticket as a stocking stuffer. Volunteer Services of Barron County, Inc. is selling raffle tickets for a get-away package for two at the Gunflint Lodge near Grand Marais. The drawing is on January 21. This non-profit organization partners with the Office on Aging to provide rides to medical appointments, wheelchair

ramps, and friendly visitors for home-bound persons. For more information on any of these suggestions, stop by the Office on Aging or call 715-537-6225.

Office on Aging services are only partially funded by government sources such as the Older Americans Act. In order to avoid waiting lists, these programs depend heavily on contributions from participants and their families, community organizations and businesses, individuals, and fund raisers. Office on Aging services are not mandates and are not entitlements. Eligibility for most programs is based on need, not on personal income or assets. People can pay the full cost for services, or they can make a donation that they can afford. In some cases, there is a suggested donation or a required minimum co-pay. Donations accounts for nearly fifty percent of the

Nutrition Program revenues, meaning that only half as many meals would be provided daily without this local support.

Volunteers are a huge part of Office on Aging programs. Their time and dedication makes a significant impact on the quality and affordability of services. Currently we are in need of more volunteers to deliver noon meals in Rice Lake. Volunteers can decide on their own time commitment – once a month, once a week, whatever works. Your help with recruiting volunteers is always appreciated.



## Administration

### Jeff French, County Administrator

#### LCC/Extension:

This Committee did not meeting in November but, was meeting on December 3<sup>rd</sup> to make decisions regarding the annual NR135 fee for Industrial Sand Mines, Financial Assurance for NR135 and Wildlife Damage claims.

#### Property Committee:

Committee met in late October with no November meeting and there is no meeting scheduled for December.

#### Executive:

Committee will be meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup> to receive additional in-

formation regarding the potential lawsuit, Freedom From Religion, and to strategize on the 2014 Health Insurance Renewal.

#### Solid Waste Board:

On November 28<sup>th</sup>, we received a payment of \$ 378,556.36 for January to October electrical sales from the newly installed electrical generation unit. Work on the air permit and the option of burning pharmaceuticals continues.

## Real Property Lister

Pat Haas, Real Property Lister

You may hear the consistent hum of printers or the clunking of a folding machine when you pass by Room 2104 of the Government Center in the next couple of weeks. The Real Property Lister has been gathering figures from local and state governmental units that will be used to print over 42,000 real estate and personal property tax bills. Seventy seven unique mill rates will be calculated during this time to be applied to individual assessment values. Take that dollar amount and subtract the lottery credit and first dollar credit, add the recycling &/or dam maintenance fees, ETC., and **WALLA** you have a tax bill! (Walla as defined in the "slang" dictionary: And there you have it!



## Human Resources

### New / Replacement Positions

<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Office / Department</u>	<u>Incumbent</u>	<u>New / Replacement</u>
Behavioral Health / Community Support Program	Health & Human Services	Recruiting	New (4.0 FTE's)
PT Civilian Communication Officer	Sheriff	Recruiting	Replacement

- WPS and the Horton Group conducted 14 health insurance education sessions related to the plan design changes being implemented in 2013.
- Sterling Bank was on-site four days to assist employees in setting up a health savings account (HSA).

## Treasurer's Office

The 2012 Real Estate Tax bills will be calculated by the Property Lister in the next few weeks. After the tax bills are calculated and certified by the municipal clerks, we will prepare the data for updating the municipal tax collection programs. Our Annual Municipal Treasurer's Training will be held on December 11, 2012.

We are also getting ready to start the In-rem tax foreclosure process on the 2009 delinquent taxes. There are approximately 220 unpaid parcels totaling \$200,000 plus interest and penalty. The owners and mortgage holders will be notified by certified mail when the documents are filed with the court in January 2013. This list will also be published in all the county newspapers for three consecutive weeks and will also be posted on the Barron County website.

Our Annual Tax Foreclosed Property Sale was held on Thursday, November 29, 2012, at the Justice Center. The following parcels were sold:

A list of all other Barron County Property available for sale can be found on the Barron County website.

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>PIN Number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Sale</u>
Town of Arland	004-3500-22-000	S35-T33N-R13W W 166 FT OF E 830 FT OF SW-SE	5A	3,000
Town of Crystal Lake	016-1800-15-000	S18-T35N-R14W PRT NW-NW DESC & CONV 414/571	5.92A	5,001
Town of Maple Plain	030-1900-06-000	S19-T36N-R14W PRT SE-NE SHOWN AS PCL 1 CSM 9/62	3.7A	17,000
Town of Prairie Farm	034-0200-17-000	S02-T32N-R13W W 313 FT OF S 209 FT OF SW-SW	1.5A	8,800
Village of Haugen	136-8023-17-000	S18-T36N-R11W S 14 RDS 4 FT OF N 36 RDS OF SW-NE LYG W OF HWY	1.8A	15,600

