



Issue 04

# County Administration Newsletter

*Vision & Stewardship*

April 2014

## Administration

I have decided unilaterally that no more snow will fall in Burnett County this spring...if only it were that easy!

Administration continues to focus on several projects including the personnel policy revision. Since this will impact all of us and to ensure the correct information is being disseminated, here is where we are with this project. A draft revision of the personnel policy is completed and is being reviewed by other staff. The current draft does not include proposed benefit changes as the analysis is not yet complete. The analysis being completed entails looking at sev-

eral options on how the county provides time off, accrued time payouts, and deferred compensation. In addition, the inclusion of a county vehicle use and staff development policies are being developed. The intent is to create an updated personnel policy that provides a more sustainable long term benefit model for the county, provides for staff development and creates a benefit plan to attract talent as employees retire. Additional research and survey work of benefit structures across Wisconsin counties is being completed as well as public sector

employment benefit trends across the country. Once the analysis is complete, options will be provided to the Administration Committee for review and input, as well as the Workplace Enhancement (WE) committee.

The compensation piece also continues to be reviewed. Staff anticipate presenting the findings of the research to the Administration Committee in June.

*-Nate*

## Health and Human Services

Julie Galonska, Chief of Interpretation, Education & Cultural Resource Management for St. Croix National Scenic Riverway applied for a \$25,000 grant to promote the use of the St. Croix River and associated parks and trails by local residents of Burnett County. Presently, it is mostly tourists that use this resource in our county. She hopes to encourage residents to utilize the riverway and parks to promote holistic health including mental and physical health. As part of the grant, Julie has written

that she wants to give Burnett County Health and Human Services \$5,000 to assist in this promotional project. This is a very appropriate partnership given that mental health is identified by the Healthy Burnett partnership as the number one health priority, and nutrition/obesity is the number three health priority in the county. Applicants will be notified in early April whether or not they were awarded the grant.



## Land and Water Conservation

In 1955, the National Association of Conservation Districts began a program to encourage Americans to focus on stewardship. The stewardship concept involves personal and social responsibility, including a duty to learn about and improve natural resources so that we leave a rich legacy for future generations. The program relies on locally-led conservation departments/districts sharing and promoting stewardship and conservation activities.

Stewardship Week is officially celebrated from the last Sunday in April to the first Sunday in May. It is one of the world's

largest conservation-related observances. This year the Stewardship Program is celebrating its 59<sup>th</sup> year. The theme for this year's observance (April 27 – May 4) is "DIG DEEPER: Mysteries in the Soil".



As part of this observance, the LWCD provides Stewardship Week materials to all 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in Burnett

County. Materials include student booklets, teacher guides, activity sheets & bookmarks. This year these materials will reach 275 students and 17 teachers. Along with the materials we enclose information regarding the current year's theme and a request for feedback from the teachers regarding the materials and how they are used.

*When the land does well for its owner and the owner does well by his land – when both end up better by reason of their partnership – then we have conservation. - Aldo Leopold*

## Forestry

With spring right around the corner we begin to think of the potential for spring wildland fires and the impacts that they have. Although we have been very lucky in the last few years with very few and very small fires on the county forest, the potential for a large fire is still very much a possibility, much like the fire in Douglas County last spring. Wildland fires not only have an impact on the department employees who spend many extra hours fighting fire when needed, but it also has a direct impact on our

potential income from the forest. Take for instance a 40 year old pine plantation that has approximately 30 cords per acre in volume. If this were to burn, at current prices of \$40/cord, we stand to lose \$1200.00 per acre in stumps if it were a total loss. We would try to salvage the timber; however it would be at a much lesser price per cord if it were even possible. On top of the direct loss of timber we would have the indirect costs of re-establishing the stand. At current prices for site-prep, tree planters and trees, it is costing

approximately \$185-\$220 per acre depending on the species and stocking levels planted. This does not account for the staff hours that are put in by the department during this process. So when you decide to have a campfire or burn your yard debris this spring please use caution and do not leave these fires unattended. The impacts can be financially devastating and even worse emotionally for those who lose more than their trees.

## Emergency Management

During the upcoming camping season, Burnett County Emergency Management will begin outreach to summer camps and campgrounds in the county to assess their level of preparedness for severe weather or other emergencies. The seasonal operations and transitory nature of the populations using these facilities require planning that incorporates

self-sufficiency, communications, warning and outreach to the first responder community. If a camp/campground does not have a written plan, assistance will be provided in developing one. The key components of a disaster plan will include: identification of adequate warning methodologies, options for population protection, 3 day surviv-

ability without utilities, development of facility maps (including GIS data and pictures) and techniques for communicating with friends/relatives after a disaster. Upon completion, the plans will be shared with Fire Departments and the Sheriff's Department. Site visits and facilitation of exercises to test the plans will complete the process.

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## Register of Deeds

We would like to announce that AB-592 relating to solicitation of a fee by a business or individual for a public record, granting rule-making authority, and providing a penalty, recently passed and was signed into law by Governor Walker on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014 as ACT 247.

The legislation requires non-government agencies to specify that there is no requirement to purchase a public record or deed from them, list what government agency does provide that record, and include the pricing of that government agency. The legislation puts specific perimeters on solicitations that companies can send consumers.

Over the past few years, there has been a significant increase 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. Although the practice is legal, it is certainly unethical to use strong language and insinuations to lead customers to believe they must pay a large sum to get copies of their documents, when in reality it costs just a few dollars. The property profile and deed are already public information in our office and you can stop by anytime to take a look for free.

Most homeowners should have received the original deed when they purchased their property. If not, they can obtain a copy through the Register of Deeds' office for a minimal fee of \$2 or \$3 depending on the number of pages. Fees are governed by Wisconsin State Statute 59.43(2)(b). These scamming companies are taking advantage of Wisconsin consumers during one of the most important purchases of their lives. Often these solicitations are so of-

ficial looking that overwhelmed new homeowners will pay the fee without realizing it is not required. This law maps out certain requirements so these letters are more easily identified as unnecessary. Your Burnett County records are available immediately at the Register of Deeds Office at a fraction of the cost.

The same situation is also occurring with birth certificates. Companies offering to obtain birth certificate copies have the consumer fill out the standard state vital records request form and then charge the standard state fee of \$20 **plus** an additional \$69 "service" fee.

The Register of Deeds office does not send out solicitations for real estate or vital records. If you ever receive a letter offering to assist you in obtaining copies of your real estate records or birth certificate, please stop by our office or give us a call and we will be glad to help.

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## University of Wisconsin-Extension and Tourism

The Grantsburg Community Design Team weekend went very well. The design team is a pilot project to see how the University of Wisconsin-Extension can adapt the Minnesota Design Team concept to Wisconsin. At first glance it was a outstanding success. The amount of public participation was tremendous from youth, adults, village residents, and those who live in towns just

outside the village. The synergy of our design team professionals was excellent also. Our next steps include a post-design team meeting and identifying ongoing support with the Grantsburg community.

LakeLines Newsletter will be mailed out next month to over 5,500 lakeshore homes. This will be the first time we have mailed to lake residents without lake associations.

Beth Johnson, 4-H Youth and Families Educator, is coordinating project day for current 4-H members and non-members. It's a time to explore new creative projects for the upcoming year. Beth is taking sign-ups for summer camp at Lake 26. Camp is held from July 14-17 and membership in 4-H is not required. The Bugle (4-H newsletter) gets mailed out the first of May.

## Land Information

Some old survey and road records were scanned over the last few weeks. This will preserve the originals and provide back-up if a record is damaged or disappears. Parcel mapping

was completed in T37N-R14W (Roosevelt) and is now available on the Mapping/GIS website. Assessors have been working with the RPL on assessing new parcels and

changes for 2014. Mapping/GIS website training was done for some local realtors.

## Finance

The financial numbers for 2013 continue to be audited and adjusted for the closing that will be taking place in May. During this process, there continues to be interesting detail that provides history and also significant data for future budget processes. The 2013 and 2014 numbers presented are county wide for all departments. In the case of electricity and heating fuel, 2014 includes invoicing for the communication towers, which is an additional expense that only began at the end of 2013.

	2013	1st QTR 2014
<b>Heating Fuel</b>	\$ 25,898.65	\$ 13,107.44
<b>Electricity</b>	\$ 74,280.13	\$ 10,208.82
<b>Telephone</b>	\$ 52,693.45	\$ 13,521.39
<b>Cell Phone</b>	\$ 11,618.11	\$ 1,988.06
<b>Motor Vehicle Fuel</b>	\$ 468,558.32	\$ 113,837.83

## County Clerk

The County Clerk’s Office is in charge of administering the dog licensing program for the county. Each individual municipality is responsible for issuing dog licenses and collection of fees associated with licensing. At the end of each year dog license information and fees collected are submitted to the county where we reconcile the accounts and the municipal treasurer retains \$1.00 per license and the county collects the remaining balance due. When all accounts are reconciled, our office prepares a summary income and expense report to determine the ending fund balance. Below shows

the 2013 Income and Expense Summary Report and the Refund to Municipalities Report which shows the prorated returns based on the number/collections for licenses sold.

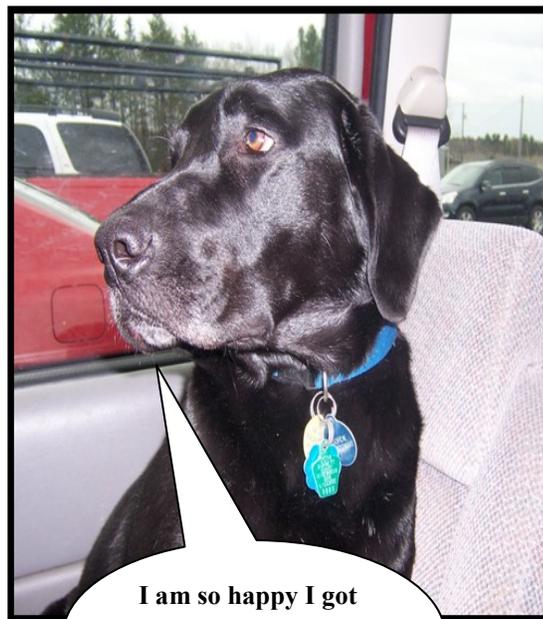
New for 2014, we have implemented a web based licensing program to issue dog licenses/reports for use by town/village treasurers. The program allows municipalities, the humane society, veterinarians, law enforcement, the health department and the public to sign into the site and view all dogs licensed. This feature is a helpful tool which will assist in finding owners of lost/stray dogs.

To access this site go to [www.jmauel.com](http://www.jmauel.com); enter burnettview (all one word) and then the password pets.

All dogs residing in Burnett County are required to be vaccinated for rabies and licensed by their town or village treasurer. The following link will take you to the form to complete to send with your rabies vaccination certificate and fee in order to be licensed. All dogs five months or older must be vaccinated and licensed by April 1 of the current year in order to avoid late fees. <http://burnettcounty.com/index.aspx?NID=927>.

### 2013 INCOME AND EXPENSE SUMMARY/DOG LICENSE FUND

BEGINNING BALANCE.....	\$1,000.00
<u>Revenue</u>	
Total License Fees Collected by Municipalities.....	\$10,214.50
5% Due State Treasury.....	\$(510.73)
<b>TOTAL REVENUE.....</b>	<b>\$9,703.77</b>
<u>Expense</u>	
Advertising.....	\$54.07
Dog Listers.....	\$1,097.50
Dog Damage Claims.....	\$7.50
Forms, Tags & Office Supplies.....	\$297.60
Postage.....	\$114.87
Stray Dogs.....	\$160.00
Treasurers.....	<u>\$2,272.00</u>
<u>Expense Sub-Total.....</u>	<u>\$4,003.54</u>
Surplus Paid to Municipalities (Wis. Stats. 174.09(2)).....	\$5,700.23
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE.....</b>	<b>\$(9,703.77)</b>
<b>ENDING BALANCE.....</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>



**I am so happy I got my rabies shot and license!**

## County Clerk—Continued

### 2013 DOG LICENSE FUND SURPLUS

Paid to towns and villages pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes 174.09(2)

Municipality	Total License Fees Collected	Percentage	Surplus to Return to Municipalities \$5,700.23
Town of Anderson	306.00	2.9957%	170.76
Town of Blaine	115.00	1.1259%	64.18
Town of Daniels	803.00	7.8610%	448.10
Town of Dewey	681.00	6.6670%	380.03
Town of Grantsburg	745.00	7.2936%	415.75
Town of Jackson	396.00	3.8768%	220.99
Town of LaFollette	284.00	2.7804%	158.49
Town of Lincoln	134.00	1.3119%	74.78
Town of Meenon	783.00	7.6656%	436.96
Town of Oakland	574.50	5.6244%	320.60
Town of Roosevelt	323.00	3.1622%	180.25
Town of Rusk	494.00	4.8363%	275.68
Town of Sand Lake	232.00	2.2713%	129.47
Town of Scott	319.00	3.1230%	178.02
Town of Siren	395.00	3.8671%	220.43
Town of Swiss	452.00	4.4251%	252.24
Town of Trade Lake	730.00	7.1467%	407.38
Town of Union	409.00	4.0041%	228.24
Town of Webb Lake	141.00	1.3804%	78.69
Town of West Marshland	158.00	1.5468%	88.17
Town of Wood River	413.00	4.0433%	230.48
Village of Grantsburg	617.00	6.0404%	344.32
Village of Siren	236.00	2.3104%	131.70
Village of Webster	474.00	4.6405%	264.52
	<b>\$10,214.50</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$5,700.23</b>

Paid to Town Treasurers by March 1, 2014