



Issue 10

# County Administration Newsletter

*Vision & Stewardship*

November 2014

## Administration

On November 12, the County Board approved the 2015 budget. While we often hear about government spending too much money or wasting it on unnecessary projects, it's important to separate Burnett County from a 10 second sound bite at the federal level. The 2015 Burnett County budget reflects the values of our community; high-quality human services and child support services, effective public safety, safe and well-maintained roads, accurate property records, well managed forests and parks, efficient use of both human and financial resources, and planning foresight. These services

obviously use a substantial amount of resources to carry out. Credit goes to the County Board as they adopted a budget that maintained these services while only increasing the levy by \$38,468, resulting in a slight decrease in the mill rate. To put the cost of services in perspective, a home valued at \$150,000 in Burnett County will pay roughly \$563 in County property taxes. Of the \$563, the following is where some of the revenue is spent:

Highway - \$86  
Public Safety - \$170  
Health and Human Services - \$66

Property Records - \$20  
Legal and Judicial - \$33  
Airport - \$4  
Building Maintenance - \$24  
Debt Service - \$26  
General Government - \$71

As the County prepares future budgets, values will change and so too will the flow of resources. I encourage all of us to be engaged in this process and understand how and where County tax revenue is spent. For questions about the budget, please contact the County Administration Office.

## Health & Human Services

**Health Insurance Marketplace**  
(<https://www.healthcare.gov/>)

The Health Insurance Marketplace is a resource where individuals, families, and small businesses can: learn about their health coverage options; compare health insurance plans based on costs, benefits, and other important features; choose a plan; and enroll in coverage. The Marketplace also provides information on programs that help people with low to moderate income and resources pay

for coverage. This includes ways to save on the monthly premiums and out-of-pocket costs of coverage available through the Marketplace, and information about other programs, including Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The Marketplace encourages competition among private health plans, and is accessible through websites, call centers, and in-person assistance.

**Update on Marketplace Open Enrollment**

The Open Enrollment period for 2015 coverage is November 15, 2014 to February 15, 2015. If you haven't enrolled in coverage by then, you generally can't buy Marketplace health coverage for 2015 until the next Open Enrollment period for coverage the following year.

If you're enrolled in a 2014 Marketplace plan, your benefit year

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ends December 31, 2014. To continue health coverage in 2015, you can renew your current health plan or choose a new health plan through the Marketplace during the 2015 Open Enrollment period.

If you don't have health coverage during 2015, you may have to pay a fee. The fee in 2015 is higher than it was in 2014 – 2% of your income or \$325 per adult/\$162.50 per child, whichever is more.

### Use the Marketplace to get covered

The Health Insurance Marketplace helps uninsured people enroll in health coverage. Fill out a Marketplace application and we'll tell you if you qualify for:

- Private health insurance with savings based on your income. Plans cover essential health benefits, pre-existing conditions, and preventive care. Most people who apply through the Marketplace qualify for premium tax credits and savings on out-of-pocket costs based on household size and income.
- Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program

(CHIP). These programs provide free or low-cost coverage to millions of families with limited income. Many states are expanding Medicaid to cover more people. Find out what Medicaid expansion means for you.

### Enrollment and coverage start dates

During Open Enrollment, if you enroll:

- **Between the 1st and 15th days of the month**, your coverage starts the first day of the next month.

- **Between the 16th and the last day of the month**, your coverage starts the first day of the second following month. So if you enroll on January 16, your coverage starts on March 1.

You may buy Marketplace insurance outside Open Enrollment **only** if you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period due to a qualifying life event such as marriage, birth or adoption of a child, or loss of other health coverage. Learn more about how you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period.

You can enroll in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) any time. There is no limited enrollment period for these programs. You can apply any time. If you're qualified, you can enroll immediately.

### Three more things to know

- If you're eligible for job-based insurance, you can consider switching to a Marketplace plan. But you'll qualify for premium tax credits and other savings based on your income only if the job-based insurance isn't

considered affordable or doesn't meet minimum value requirements.

- If you have Medicare, you're considered covered and don't have to make any changes. If you have Medicare, you can't use the Marketplace to buy a supplemental plan or dental plan.
- You can buy a plan outside the Marketplace and still meet the health care law's coverage requirements. But if you buy outside the Marketplace, you won't be eligible for premium tax credits or other savings based on your income.



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## It's Flu Season!

The snow and sudden dip in temperatures is not only a sign that winter is on its way but also that cold and flu season is upon us. That's important because the flu is a serious illness. According to government statistics, approximately 5 to 20 percent of the U.S. population get the flu each year and more than 200,000 are hospitalized.

Your best protection against the flu, aside from isolating yourself behind a locked door until after February, is to take advantage of the flu vaccine. This is particularly important if you are part of the population with conditions that make the flu especially dangerous – seniors aged 65 and older, children (especially those younger than 2), women who are pregnant, and people with chronic health conditions.

In addition to getting vaccinated, to keep yourself (and those around you) healthy you should also follow a few simple everyday steps:

1. **Stay informed.** Learn more at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Seasonal Influenza website: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>.
2. **Maintain a healthy lifestyle** through rest, diet, exercise, and relaxation.
3. **Wash hands frequently** with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available. Be sure to wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
4. **Avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes.** Germs spread this way.



5. **Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue,** or cough and sneeze into your elbow. Dispose of tissues in no-touch trash receptacles.
6. **Keep frequently touched common surfaces clean,** such as telephones, computer key boards, door-knobs, etc.
7. **Don't spread the flu! If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home.** Symptoms of flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or chills and cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting. CDC recommends that sick workers stay home if they are sick with flu-like illness until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever without the use of fever-reducing

## Land and Water Conservation

### Siren High School students compete in soil judging event

The Tri-County Soil Judging Contest was held on October 16. This annual event rotates between Burnett, Polk & Washburn Counties. This year's contest (in its 38th year), hosted by Washburn



County, was held at the Spooner Agricultural Research Station. This was an ideal location since the pits to be evaluated were located just behind the event site saving time and travel.

The event was attended by 63 students repre-

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senting 5 schools. The students compete as teams and individuals. Each school is allowed two teams of four contestants each. The participants examined the soil & surrounding land. They then defined texture, structure, drainage and production capabilities and land uses of several different soils. The weather was perfect, which added to the excitement of the out-of-doors event.

After judging the pits, the students headed back to the research center for lunch and

the awards presentation.

Team winners, and recipients of trophies, were: 1st Place: Shell Lake Team #1; 2nd Place: Shell Lake Team #2; 3rd Place: Spooner Team #1. Siren Team #1 and Unity Team #1 tied for 4th place.

Individual winners and recipients of a commemorative medal were:

- 1st Place: Marty Anderson, Shell Lake;
- 2nd Place: Keenan Cook, Siren;
- 3rd Place: Bailee Hanson, Shell Lake;
- 4th Place: Amber Anderson,

Shell Lake;

- 5th Place: Trevor Anderson, Shell Lake;
- 6th Place: Bailey Peterson, Spooner;
- 7th Place: Beth Johnson, Unity;
- 8th Place: Courtney Melton, Shell Lake.

This year's event was extremely competitive with just points separating the top three teams and the top 8 individuals.

Congratulations to all the students who participated in a job well done. We hope to see them all again next year in Burnett County!

## IT Department

### Gigabit internet coming to Burnett County

Internet access within Burnett County has come a long way in the last 5 years. We have more cell towers, 3G and 4G access, and now fiber internet. It was not Google that brought fiber access to Siren, but our own hometown Siren Telephone company.

The Burnett County Government Center has been using SirenTel's fiber for some time. With it we were able to attach the Highway department directly to our network in the building. Our highway department has full access to county servers from across town as if they were right here within the building. Shortly we will have the ability to provide that kind

of throughput to the internet as well.

It is surprising how far we have come just within the last 5 years. Prior to March of 2010, the county was using a T1 line from AT&T and internet access from WiscNet for our internet connection. That T1 line gave us a maximum connection speed of 1.5 Megabits to be shared with everyone in the building. Typically about 1.5x the speed you would find in a home user's DSL line. We were able to function normally only because we blocked access to nearly everything on the internet. At the time we were also paying around \$7,100 per Megabit per year. Because of our remote location, increasing our bandwidth using the older T1 style

lines was extremely cost prohibitive.

In March of 2010 we switched our internet connection to a Siren Telephone fiber line. At the time we were able to increase our internet connection to 5 Megabit. And we were able to lower our cost per megabit to \$2,880 per year. A couple years ago SirenTel quietly increased our connection to 10 Megabit without increased cost, dropping our price per Megabit in half.

And now on December 1st, 2014, we will be getting another increase from SirenTel, this time accompanied with a price decrease. We will be receiving a 1 Gigabit (1,000 Megabit) con-

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nection to the internet, at a substantially reduced cost of \$5.70 per Megabit per year.

But that costs more than Google fiber. Of course it does, a village the size of Siren cannot compete with the economies of scale of a city like Kansas City. Google also makes additional money from targeted ads and general use of their service. SirenTel is a carrier; they are not going to profit from our internet traffic. Unfortunately it is still too expensive for home use, if it wasn't, I would already be packing up to move to Siren.

So what is the benefit to the

county in the short term? Not much honestly, although some users will disagree. Our current usage is about 2-5 Megabit consistently during the day. We block access to some big bandwidth websites such as internet radio, which could be reversed with this change. But we are unlikely to push anywhere close to 1 Gigabit of traffic anytime in the near future. One short term benefit to this change is not needing to police the internet because of bandwidth concerns. Those bandwidth concerns will no longer exist.

The long term benefits are much more interesting. We will have the ability to access the internet with the same bandwidth as a

connection on our own network. That opens up a lot of possibilities; such as cloud storage, remote sites, and co-location with other government entities. We can look into reducing or eliminating our BadgerNet connection to save cost and increase speed and bandwidth for the services currently using it (Courts Network, Child Support KIDS, Jail TIME).

The biggest benefit to having a gigabit network connection is, whatever services we add on to run over our internet connection will not affect our normal usage. We will have room to spare for many years to come.

## Sheriff's Office

On December 31, 2014 I will retire from the profession of law enforcement having completed 38 years, 11 months of service. During this career, I have worked for the City of Glendora, Los Angeles County, California; Kootenai County Sheriff's Department, Idaho; Idaho Department of Law Enforcement, Bureau of Narcotics and the training division; Idaho De-



partment of Juvenile Justice; Northwest Behavioral Health – Warden of a private juvenile corrections facility in Idaho; Chief of Police, Siren, WI and lastly, Sheriff of Burnett County for the past 12 years.

During this career, I have received outstanding training and experience being able to work in city, village, county, state, federal and the private sector assignments. This training and experience has allowed

me to travel throughout the country presenting training at the federal and state levels. I have presented before two chambers of state government and twice before the Congress of the United States.

The greatest joy I received in this career was working first for the victim, working very hard to solve their case and second working with the suspects, breaking them down, obtaining a confession and solving the crime.

In 39 years I have seen many changes to the profession, mostly positive, but law enforcement has changed. I am not sure that the new officers would be able to function with-

out all of today's electronics, but I can also say, that all of today's electronics sometimes get the best of me.

The men and women in law enforcement are a unique brand of people. Most, if not all, are type "A" personalities, hard charging always right or at least they think they are. They love to push the rules and regulations wherever possible to obtain a lawful solution. Most of the time this works, but there are times where lawful lines are crossed. This is not acceptable and the need to hold the officers accountable occurs. This has occasionally been the case, not one I relish, but as a manager, one I must address. Failure to address wrong on any level is

empowerment for the wrong action. In a law abiding society, this cannot be tolerated. If this is allowed to be tolerated, then the organization is corrupt and no better than those who knowingly violate the law.

I have been asked if I will miss the job; what I will do in retirement; and if I will remain in the area.

The answers; I will miss the good aspects of the profession and there are many good aspects. They greatly outweigh the bad or negative. I will miss the men and women who continue in the profession for all the right reasons, honesty, moral character, integrity and valor to name a few. I will miss the citizens that I have so

proudly served for 39 years. To be able to serve them has been my greatest honor and privilege.

I am currently working on one book with a second one planned. I hope to obtain a part-time job for a little extra spending money and fill some hours of the week. Our home has been for sale and when it sells we do plan on leaving the area with no destination in mind. We will go in the direction we are led.

I wish you all and the incoming Sheriff well in your future endeavors.

*-Dean Roland*

## University of Wisconsin-Extension and Tourism

We are proud to share that we have 82 youth and 26 leaders enrolled in Burnett County 4-H for the 2014-2015 4-H year! We have five new leaders who are awaiting training. Do you want to join in the fun? You can always enroll as a volunteer leader; enroll at <https://wi.4honline.com> today!

There are 23 youth in grades K-2 who are classified as Cloverbuds. Members in grades 3+ have enrolled in 59



separate projects. Our biggest project enrollments are in Art (including Drawing and Painting), Photography, Youth Leadership, LEGO®, Archery, Foods and Nutrition, and Music.

Throughout Burnett County there are four active 4-H clubs: Jolly H, from the Grantsburg area, Orange, from the Webster/Danbury area, Wood Creek,

from the Siren area, and Wood River Beavers, from the Grantsburg area. You can choose to join a club or be a leader-at-large and focus on countywide activities.



If you aren't sure if you'd like being a volunteer, consider

sharing your talents with youth for an hour or two at our biannual 4-H Project Day. The next Project Day is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 11, 2015 at the Siren School.