



Issue 21

County Administration Newsletter

Vision & Stewardship

December 2015

Administration

It's incredible how quickly time seems to pass by...I can hardly believe that another year has come and gone.

And with the passing time we can look back at the successes of this past year. From the implementation of an updated personnel manual to preparing the foundation for a new combined Highway/Forestry facility, the county is moving in a positive and sustainable direction.

Focusing on financial management was a key task of 2015. While levy limits and a decrease in equalized valuation can certainly lead to financial challenges, the County Board members provided the nec-

essary support to ensure solid financial systems are in place for the future. Their leadership provided for:

- a review of the investment policy, to ensure investments are meeting the established benchmark
- adoption of an updated general fund balance policy that will assist the County with future capital and infrastructure expenses
- expedited audit process allowing policy makers to understand year end results during the creation of the annual budget

- formal budget guidelines providing direction to departments

While these may seem like mundane aspects of government, they are critical to ensuring the most effective use of tax payer dollars.

In addition to the leadership of our elected officials, I want to thank all the staff members who carried out the services we provide. From the deputies keeping our community safe to the highway folks maintaining safe road conditions, everyone does their part to serve the residents of Burnett County, and I am grateful for all of you!

I wish you all a safe and Happy New Year!
- Nate

Aging and Disability Resource Center

How many people nearing retirement can say they have worked at the same place of employment since their junior year of high school? The ADRC of Northwest Wisconsin will say farewell to someone who can. Connie Crosby will retire on January 15, 2016 after 43 ½ years of service to Burnett County, with almost 12 of those years as

an Elder Benefit Specialist within the Burnett County Aging Unit and ADRC of Northwest Wisconsin.

Connie puts her heart and soul into everything she does, so it's obvious that a career of public services was the path for her. She started working for Burnett County, part time, as a junior in high school and continued to

become a full time employee after graduating from high school. Connie started working as an Economic Support Specialist serving people of all ages and eventually narrowed into a population she focused on for the rest of her career: elderly and disabled individuals.

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Connie’s advice to those new to the workforce is to always treat people like you would like to be treated. “Every person needs to be treated with respect and compassion.” If you know Connie or have worked with her over the years, you know she is a wealth of information and is truly an expert in her field.

Connie believes if you don’t know the answers to questions, do the research or ask someone. You should never be afraid to ask questions of others.

When Connie retires, she plans to spend more time with family, especially with her nieces and nephews, creating more memories and spending more “best days ever” with them. She also hopes to see more of Wisconsin

and the United States. With her love of the outdoors, Connie plans to visit many National Parks.

The ADRC of Northwest Wisconsin wishes Connie all the best in the next chapter in her life. Connie has earned the time to relax, enjoy family and friends, and lose herself in those things she loves the most. We hope she enjoys every minute!

Forestry and Parks

We are coming to the end of another great year and getting ready to set our 2016 projects into motion. Once again this year, Burnett County and the Forest & Parks Department will be offering a grant opportunity for the towns and villages that have either County Forest Lands within their boundaries or offer a direct main access route to County Forest Lands that is routinely used. This grant is known as the “Burnett County Forest Town/Village Road Grant” and was started in 2015. The purpose of the grant is to provide some funding to towns and villages to help upgrade roads that con-



Town of Sand Lake reconstruction project

tinually have issues. This is a 50/50 cost sharing grant opportunity for these towns and villages.

Last year Burnett County gave out two separate grants totaling \$14,620 to assist local towns with road projects.

Both projects were completed and the roads were upgraded. We understand that this was not a large sum of money considering the overall costs of maintaining roads. However, we hope that



Town of Lincoln graveling project

towns and villages will use this opportunity in the next grant

cycle, as we work together to make Burnett County a better place to work and live.

Towns and villages will be notified by mail after the first of the year about the

2016 grant information and the total amount of funds available. We are looking forward to assisting towns and villages and creating more successful partnerships. Please do not hesitate to contact the Burnett County Forest & Parks Department with any questions.

Have a safe and wonderful Holiday Season!!

Health & Human Services

Annual economic cost of excessive alcohol use in Burnett County: \$14.5 million

What we pay for: \$1.6 million in Healthcare, \$10.4 million in lost productivity, and \$2.4 million other (costs associated with the criminal justice system, motor vehicles crashes, and other consequences).

Alcohol is Wisconsin’s drug of choice and the social, economic and health costs are significant. Despite efforts such as saturation patrols and public education, the problem of drunk driving has shown little decline in our state and court systems. Alcoholism is a treatable, but chronic relapsing disease, and statistics show repeat Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) violators are not declining and drunk drivers break the law over and over.

Statistics show that:

- Wisconsin’s rates of alcohol use and misuse have been among the highest – if not the highest – in the nation. As of 2012, Wisconsin adults continue to have the highest rate of binge drinking among all the U.S. States and territories. As of 2013, Wisconsin’s rate of heavy drinking among adults is still higher than the national rate. The rate of binge drinking among Wisconsin women of child-bearing ages is currently the

highest in the nation.

- Persons with alcohol levels above the legal limit are more likely to be involved in a serious auto accident.
- Given Wisconsin’s high rate of alcohol consumption, it is not surprising that the rates at which Wisconsin experiences the consequences associated with alcohol use tend to be higher than national rates.
- Wisconsin has consistently higher arrest rates than the nation overall for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated, and more than three times the national rate of arrests for other liquor law violations.
- Nearly one-quarter of suicide deaths are estimated to be alcohol related. Wisconsin’s suicide rate has increased in recent years and remains higher than the national rate.
- OWI arrests and convictions of repeat OWI offenders are higher in Wisconsin than in the nation as a whole.
- Wisconsin has less stringent penalties than other states for OWI – particularly for the first offense, which is not

criminalized unless a person under age 16 is present in the vehicle. Nevertheless, Wisconsin has 1.3 times the national rate of OWI arrests, and 3.3 times the national rate of other liquor law violations.

Burnett County has an Intoxicated Driver Intervention Program (IDIP) aimed at expediting drunken driving cases to get offenders into the justice system and court supervision more quickly, which in turn will make the roads safer. The overall goal is to reduce future offenses and provide the offenders with an increased awareness of the dangers of impaired driving.

There is often a long delay between arrest and entrance into a treatment program. Evidence shows the offender is much less amenable to treatment the longer the delay. We hope that by providing this program the offender will be more agreeable to looking at their issues and being more open to treatment. To help with the absolute sobriety requirement of the program, clients will have frequent drug testing and breathalyzer tests to determine whether the client is using alcohol or other drugs.

Annual Cost of Excessive Alcohol Use in Wisconsin



\$6.8 Billion
Total Losses Annually
\$4.9 Billion
Lost Productivity
\$749 Million
Alcohol-related Health Care
\$649 Million
Alcohol-related Criminal Justice
\$498 Million
Alcohol-related Crime

The Cost of Excessive Alcohol Use, 2013 Executive Summary

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For more information on IDIP please contact Tessa Anderson, IDIP Coordinator, at 715-349-8878.

AODA Resources in Burnett County:

- Aurora Community Counseling: 715-349-7233
- St. Croix Tribal Clinic: 715-349-8554

- Burnett County Department of Health and Human Services: 715-349-7600
- Burnett County 24 Hour Crisis Line: 1-888-636-6655

Land and Water Conservation

The Land and Water Conservation Department has just wrapped up a Grazing Agreement with the Natural Resource Conservation Service. This agreement, worth \$42,000, covered six counties in Northwest Wisconsin: Burnett, Washburn, Sawyer, Polk, Barron, and Rusk. The grant was administered by Burnett County and included partners from UW-Extension, Northwest Graziers Network, Spooner Ag Research Station, Crex Meadows, St Croix River Association, and UW-River Falls.

Although this grant spanned only 13 months we were able to accomplish many activities that benefited the participating counties. We wrote 15 grazing plans

which represented 857 acres and 595 cattle, sheep, and horses. We conducted 20 follow up visits with producers to update grazing plans and provide further guidance. We also presented technology workshops (5 required): Spotted Knapweed



Workshop, Cover Crop Workshop, Silvo-Pasture Field Day, Cow-Calf Meeting, and 2 Grazing Conferences. Feedback was gathered after each event and

compiled by the UWEX educators.

Our Extension partners conducted a Forage Trial from May through October at the Spooner Ag Research Station. Information gathered from this trial was used at some of the producers' farms as part of their grazing plans.

This was our first time working with NRCS on this type of Federal Grant. It was a great success and benefit to Burnett County producers. A special recognition to Randy Gilbertson (LWCD

Planner) and Otto Wiegand (UWEX) for their outstanding work with the agricultural communities as part of this effort.

Treasurer

This year there are six new town treasurers: Daniels, Dewey, Oakland, Roosevelt, Scott, and the Town of Siren. Our office has been working with them on the municipal tax collection process. New software, NOVUS Municipal Tax Portal, is being

introduced this year for the municipal tax collection process. The County has been using NOVUS for receipting tax payments since 2007. The six new town treasurers will be using the program along with three experienced treasurers from

Jackson, Lincoln, and the Village of Siren. Bayfield, Sawyer, Washburn, and Price counties are also using this program for their towns' and villages' tax collections.

University of Wisconsin-Extension and Tourism

Raising a Thinking Child

Words parents and caregivers use with children set the stage for a child to think and independently solve problems. Children need practice thinking of alternatives and developing their problem solving skills. Parents and other caregivers can develop and practice these skills at the Raising a Thinking Child workshop. This workshop is designed for families with children ages 4-7. Parents/caregivers are in one room learning how to teach children techniques while children play in another room.



Children as young as 4 years of age can learn to think for themselves in ways most of us never thought possible. By following the proven Raising a Thinking Child program, you can teach young children:

- How to solve problems and resolve daily conflicts.
- To explore alternative solutions and their consequences
- To consider the feelings of others.

The program helps shy children to become more assertive and impulsive children to cope with frustration when things don't go their way.

The skills children learn through this program can prevent and

reduce early behaviors that predict later problems such as violence, abuse, and depression.

Beth Rank, 4-H Youth & Family Development Educator, will be offering a workshop series in partnership with the Burnett

County Family Resource Center on Monday evenings at the Grantsburg Elementary School. Classes will be offered for eight weeks, starting

February 1, 2016. The workshop series requires pre-registration and is limited to ten families. If families are interested, contact Beth at 715-349-2151 soon, before the workshop is full.

Master Gardener Program

The Master Gardener Program in Burnett County started in 1999. Over 47 people have been trained since that time, and there are currently nine certified Master Gardener Volunteers MGVs for 2016. The UWEX Educator facilitating the Master Gardener Program is University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Agriculture Agent Kevin Schoessow.

Gardens around Historic Site Provide Education

Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) maintain several gardens at Forts Folle Avoine Historic Park, a County-owned facility located near Webster, that

feature native plants, heirloom vegetables, herbs, perennials, and cut flowers. These gardens and other perennial landscape plantings around the historic buildings provide a wonderful educational experience for local and out-of-town visitors.

Introducing Kids to Growing and Eating Veggies

MGVs guided students at the Webster Elementary School Garden in lessons on gardening to last a life time. Last spring K-4 classes took turns planting seeds and cutting up potatoes to plant. During summer school some of the early vegetables were used for lunches. This fall potatoes were dug up; it was like a scavenger hunt. Then the nutritionist baked them for the whole school to try. Students have been introduced to vegetables that they've never tried before and have been inspired to start gardens at home.

Farmers' Market Educates Consumers

Burnett County Farmers' Markets (BCFM), a community organization of local farmers that provides access to fresh, locally grown produce, began at Siren in 2007. Since that time, MGVs have been invited to serve four additional market locations. Samples are provided at the Siren market to pique customer interest and to provide new

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ideas for seasonal foods. Since BCFM is a licensed WIC organization and authorized vendors accept WIC vouchers, many lower-income residents are getting useful information on how to prepare more nutritious foods for their families.

Where you can find activities by

Master Gardener Volunteers in Burnett County:

- Forts Folle Avoine Historic Park
- Grantsburg Library
- Webster Elementary School Garden
- Webster Library
- Lake Lutheran Church
- Burnett County Farmers Market
- Olsen Drive, Grantsburg

- Burnett Garden Club

Master Gardener Volunteer Service in 2015:

- Youth Education: 12 hours
- Adult Education: 3 hours
- Support: 659 hours
- Total: 674 hours
- Value: \$15,001
- Since 2000: 8,014 hours at a value of over \$139,158

Veterans' Services

Planning to Travel? If you are planning to travel, whether for a short vacation or to escape our wonderful northern weather for a few months, there are some measures you can/should take in order to ensure you are able to obtain VA Health Care while away. When you travel, your current health care team is responsible for your care. You will not be assigned to another VA. However, you must call the VA that you may need to use while away to register. The toll free number for VAMC Minneapolis is 866-414-5058. There is an automated answering message and then you will be prompted to dial your party's 5 digit extension followed by the pound sign.

Extensions you may need are listed in each area below.

- PACT (Patient Aligned Care Team) or your Primary Care: **9-1100#**
- Medications: **9-2090#**
- The Travel Veteran Coordinator (TVC): **9-2541#**

The TVC will need to know:

- Your temporary address
- Telephone where you can be reached
- Dates you will be away
- Name of the VA you would like to use while you are away, if there is more than one near your location

Ask if you will need any lab tests, supplies or other care while away. Take a health summary, medication list and your VA phone numbers with you.

The Health Summary and Medication list can be downloaded if you have a MyHealthVet account (www.myhealth.va.gov).

The County Veterans Service Officer can assist you.

January

- 4 - First National Elections (1789)
- 15 - Pentagon completed
- 15 - Martin Luther King Day, 3rd Mon
- 17 - Operation Desert Storm began (1991)
- 27 - Vietnam Peace Accord signed (1973)
- 28 - U.S Coast Guard established (1915)

February

- 1 - Nat'l Freedom Day
- 8 - BSA founded (1910)
- 12 - Lincoln's Birthday
- 19 - President's Day
- 22 - Washington's Birthday
- 22 - Purple Heart is established (1932)
- 23 - Iwo Jima Flag raised (1945)
- 27 - U.N Victory in Gulf (1991)