



Issue 09

County Administration Newsletter

Vision & Stewardship

October 2014

Administration

At the October County Board meeting, the Board approved a lease with North Memorial to utilize a County-owned hangar to operate their medical air transport service. This lease builds upon the partnership that has been developing over the years.

North Memorial Ambulance Service has been providing emergency medical services to Burnett and Washburn Counties for over 20 years and for communities across Minnesota since 1961. What once began as a small hospital based ambulance service with 3 ambulances, now encompasses a fleet of 125 vehicles, a staff of 850, that includes EMTs, paramedics, dispatchers, billing specialists,

fleet maintenance, administrative and technical support. North Memorial is committed to providing a full spectrum of transportation services and is now expanding their air medical division to include a new helicopter base in Siren early November of this year. Having a helicopter available in Burnett County will expedite transferring patients that are critically ill or injured quickly to tertiary care centers.

North Ambulance responds to roughly 100,000 requests for service each year. Because of the collaborative working relationship with the Burnett County Sheriff's Office, emergency pre-arrival instructions

for 911 callers are transferred and handled in conjunction with our communication center.

North Memorial Ambulance Service trains with many local first responder agencies and fosters strong partnerships that provide premier medical service to the citizens of Burnett County that are second to none. North Memorial utilizes state of the art equipment, advocates best practice standards of care, and works tirelessly to provide the highest level of care to patients and their families.

Aging and Disability Resource Center

One of ADRC's roles is to identify unmet needs within the community's disabled and elder populations. We rely on community members to share with us what they struggle with, whether it is day to day living concerns or perhaps preparing for the future. ADRC board members and Aging Advisory members are out and about in the community, listening and bringing back issues for the agency to address.

ADRC plans Educational and outreach events based on the needs of the area. *Final Affairs* and *Powerful*

Tools for Caregivers are two examples. *Final Affairs* is a daylong workshop, co-hosted with UWEX, about arranging your personal and legal affairs and end-of-life issues by providing practical advice from local professionals. The nationally available *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* is described by its developers as a "self-care education program for family caregivers. The Powerful Tools for Caregivers program will provide tools and strategies to better handle the unique caregiver challenges."

Our events can be found on our

website: www.adrcnwwi.org.

Burnett area ADRC Board Representatives: Dave McGrane (Chair), Dorothy Richard, Gary Lundberg, Crystal Peterson, Dick Klawitter, and Gladys Beers.

Burnett County Aging Advisory members: Judy Johnson, Darlene Erickson, Gladys Beers, Sharon Rochel, Eldon Freese, and Dorothy Richard.

You are also welcome to contact Laura Neve, Director, at 877-485-2372.

Emergency Management

COMMUNICATION...It's not just about towers!

As you may know, the County recently switched from wide-band to narrow band for our Public Safety communications system. The project has been in the works for a long time and is not yet complete. Six sites are complete with three more in progress.

During this process, we have taken a hard look at what the deficiencies were in the old system and tried to engineer solutions into the new system. These solutions are both technological and operational. We are building more towers with redundant links in place to ensure a robust system under extreme conditions. Fiber optic cables will soon link our towers. This places Burnett County in an excellent position for future technological upgrades.

The next steps will be operational. Training in the use of all available frequencies by responders will be imperative so that sharing of critical information is seamless during complex events involving multiple agencies. Operational protocols will be developed (with input from all agencies) that prevent multiple users from using the same frequency; which causes confusion and miscommunication.

Communication is also about problem solving. When glitches are discovered, we must move swiftly to share the information, develop a corrective action recommendation and then implement the solution. This is applicable to both operational and technical issues. During the recent cutover to narrowband, numerous technical issues popped up that were quickly resolved by County staff working with



our contractors. In the future, there are sure to be situations where miscommunication occurs. That will be as easy (or hard!) as sharing what went wrong and putting our heads together to come up with a solution.

Happy 
 Fall y'all

Forestry & Parks

If any of you have followed recent articles in the paper regarding the timber sale revenues that the Burnett County Forest is bringing in this year, you already know that we are having a great year. We annually budget our estimated revenues between \$800,000 and \$900,000 depending on the year. From January 1st through September this year we have collected approximately \$1,604,458 from county forest timber sales, almost double what our estimated revenues are for this year. But with this great year I would like to bring a word of caution.

The Forestry Department holds two timber sale bid openings each year. We offer approximately 2,250 acres of timber for sale annually, and issue around 25-35 separate contracts for this acreage. Occasionally we offer more due to natural disasters much like the 2011 wind storm, but otherwise try to stay at an acreage that is sustainable over time. Each of these contracts has a length of two years for the

contractor to complete the sale. On average we complete around 25-30 contracts annually with the majority of contracts not being cut until their second year. However, we are starting to see many of the sales get cut right after they are purchased or at least within the first year.

So why the word of caution? Due to the late winter, and wet spring, summer and fall, contractors have not been able to cut on heavier soils and have been forced to stay on the lighter sandy soils that we have here in Burnett County. Hence the reason many sales are being cut earlier than usual and why we are seeing almost double our estimated revenues this year. So bottom line - we are cutting our sales in a shorter time frame than what we have in the past. These sales will not be there to cut next year to help meet next year's estimated revenues. On top of that, if we have a normal summer and fall next year, where contractors are able to cut on heavier soils for a longer

time, we will not see as much cutting activity. Sooner or later we may not meet our estimated revenues one of these years. Not because we didn't sell our annual acreage, but rather due to weather and market conditions that allow contractors to cut sales in other places while the time is right. Simply put, contractors will start waiting until the second year of their contracts again, which leaves a year without much cutting.

Be assured that the Burnett County Forestry Department will continue to offer our annual allowable acres of timber for sale. We will also continue to generate good revenues for Burnett County to be added to the general fund. If we have a year or two where we do not meet our estimated revenues, we just ask that you look at the five or ten year average to see a more consistent picture as to what our average annual revenues really are.



Health & Human Services

The Siren Community will be holding QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Gatekeeper Trainings for Suicide Prevention on October 22nd at the Siren School. Trainings will be held at the school during the day for high school students, and there will be a training held for the community at 7pm in the Siren School Auditorium. Everyone is welcome to attend this training. Healthy Burnett will also be promoting the program directly to local churches, law enforcement personnel, first responders and EMTs, and local firefighters, among others. Please help spread the word about this great opportunity for our community!

For the "I am STRONGER than you think" Mental Health Campaign, a Mental Health Rally Week was held the week of October 6th. Jeff Yalden, who specializes in teen audiences, spoke at Webster High School on Oc-

tober 10th, which was also World Mental Health Awareness Day. His message focused on teen mental health and empowerment. Webster High School was used as a pilot site for the Rally Week for many of the activities this year, and some activities also took place in the community. Some of the activities that were scheduled for the week included:

- A community art project at Crooked Lake Park in Siren
- An art project at the Webster High School
- "I am STRONGER than you think" wristbands and t-shirt giveaways at the Webster School
- Guerilla Marketing Campaign to include chalk painting at the schools, "Anti Stigma Business Cards", and the showing of a video created by NWP
- List of resources for teachers

to share with their students

- Table displays at each of the schools
- A new billboard will also debut on Highway 35/70 in the weeks following the Rally Week

National Park Service, Active Trails Grant Update:

So far over 120 Active Trails Passports have been distributed by our Health and Human Services Department.

There will be a final Active Trails Passport Challenge Event planned for Sunday, October 19th from 11:00am-2:00pm at Crex Meadows Wildlife Center in Grantsburg. There will be an inaugural challenge with an afternoon of fun and food! The drawings for the prizes will also take place. The Prescription Program will continue throughout the year and possibly beyond until the prescription pads are used up.

Highway Department

As another season passes we look back to evaluate the projects completed this year: approximately 15 miles of county roads had a surface treatment, and another 6 miles received a new asphalt surface with a new design that should last longer and is more environmentally friendly.

The shop is busy getting the

trucks ready for plowing snow and is installing a pretreatment systems on every truck this year. We will be using cheese brine as a pre-treatment to our salt/sand mixtures to reduce the amount of salt required to melt snow and ice from our road surfaces. We expect to see a savings of 10-20% on the costs of salt that, incidentally, went up

14% due to shortages that occurred last winter. Do not worry; we are in the process of filling our sheds for the upcoming winter season.

Remember to allow extra time for travel as snow starts to fall and remember how to drive on roadways that are not dry and clear.

Land and Water Conservation

While Burnett County doesn't seem to have many impoundments or flowages created by dams or dikes compared to our many lakes, there are a surprising number of them both statewide and within our county. The WI DNR lists approximately 3,800 dams statewide with almost 100 dams in Burnett County. These dams have a variety of owners from Burnett County or other municipalities to larger for-profit dam companies to private individuals. They come in a variety of sizes and configurations. All dams are rated as to size (small, medium or large) based on the

height of the dam and the amount of water that the structure holds back. They are also rated as to the hazards downstream (low, medium, high) which dictates a variety of state (and sometimes federal) requirements, such as zoning, Emergency Action Plans (EAP), Dam Failure Analysis (DFA), and inspections and repairs. The WI DNR spot checks some dams every year but generally it's an owner responsibility.

Burnett County LWCD owns and operates 4 dams. They are Clam, Minerva, Loon Creek and Webb Creek Dams. We're lucky that all our dams are considered

low hazard due to the lack of development downstream and other factors.

Currently we formally inspect each dam every five years and are developing an EAP and DFA for all of them as required by the State with Loon Creek's being almost finalized.

We completed a major repair at Clam Dam a couple of years ago with some minor repairs yet to be completed on Clam and Loon Creek. We are starting to plan for a major concrete repair project on Minerva within the next two to five years.

Maintenance and Grounds

Did you know that the basement of the Government Center once flooded? Yep, back in 1986, there was about an inch of water above the floor. The good news – there were no offices located in the basement at the time, and the fix was relatively simple. The rain runoff pond's overflow pump chamber floats needed to be adjusted. (The basement also flooded during construction – but we won't count that one!)

Needless to say, it would be a disaster if a basement flood would happen today. Ever since the 1986 flood, the Mainte-

nance Department has monitored the ground water level below the floor of the Government Center and has taken whatever action necessary to keep the water pumping. In dry years, the ground water level has been over 11 feet below the basement floor – in wet years, like this year, within 6 inches. Typically, the level is normally between 3 to 5 feet.

The overflow pumps for the rain runoff pond sends water out to the Airport's drainage system, which eventually drains into the Clam River. Furthermore, the roadside ditches at the

front of the Government Center also drain to the Airport's drainage system via gravity – no pumps needed. Roof and foundation drain water flows out to a ditch along the south bound lane of Highway 35. This eight inch line, which is visible near the east side of the building close to Highway 35, became clogged in 2010 and had to be dug out and cleared.

High ground water levels late in the fall have caused winter time ground heaving issues in our lower parking lot in the past.

University of Wisconsin-Extension and Tourism

The Jordan Buck Centennial celebration concluded with the banquet on Saturday, October 4th. One hundred and fifty people came from four different states to celebrate the greatest whitetail buck ever known. The entire centennial festivities help to promote the county and our hunting heritage. From a marketing perspective stories are one of the most effective tools to sell any product. And the story the Jordan Buck is as captivating as any story around. As one Jordan Buck fan posted on Facebook, "The Jordan Buck is the best hunting story ever."

North American Whitetail Television filmed the banquet and will be airing the show on the Sportsman Channel on November 12th. As world renowned editor Gordon Whittington said, "History has been made in Burnett County with the Jordan Buck Centennial celebration." The evening ended with the reading of a proclamation from Governor Walker declaring November 20, 2014 (100 year anniversary date) as "James Jordan Buck Day" in the State of Wisconsin.

There are still ways to celebrate.

Centennial hats and raffle tickets for the Jordan Buck replica shoulder mount (drawing Nov. 20th) are available in the UWEX office. Also, a limited number of Jordan Buck commemorative coins are available at the Webster gift shop.

If you haven't seen the photos of the building of the Jordan Buck, you can at Facebook.com/BuildTheJordanBuck. Many thanks go out to the many partners that made this happen.

Veterans' Services

During 2013, the WI legislature made changes to the Wisconsin Property Tax Credit (PTC) for Disabled Veterans and their surviving Spouses. Beginning in Tax Year 2014, any surviving spouse, not just those whose veterans were 100% service connected disabled at time of death, who is in receipt of DIC and is a resident of WI, is eligible for the WI PTC. That will begin with

any primary residence property taxes actually paid during 2014. Those will be claimed when you file taxes the first part of 2015. Eligible surviving spouses must first establish eligibility from WDVA. The Burnett County CVSO can assist with this. One sticking point is that WDVA has not yet posted guidelines on how to apply, and so this will require patience as we antici-

pate an initial logjam once they do post guidelines.

As we approach the holiday season - Halloween, Veterans Day, Deer Hunting, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day - please be safe and take care of each other.

November Dates of Interest
 10 USMC Day (1775)
 11 Veterans Day

Zoning/Land Use

Permit totals through 9/29/14 are Land Use - 357, Sanitary - 153 and Soil Tests - 87. September was a very busy month as owners/contractors are trying to get projects started before Winter. Our 2014 Year-to-Date (YTD)

revenue (as of 9/30/14) is up 1.6% compared to YTD 2013.

The final version of NR 115 was published last month. The biggest change will be the regulation of impervious surfaces for riparian parcels. We have until Octo-

ber 2016 to implement these DNR regulations. We plan on adopting these new regulations during the 2015/2016 winter so they will go into effect for the 2016 construction season.
