



Issue 12

# County Administration Newsletter

*Vision & Stewardship*

February 2015

## Administration

Since the release of the Governor's budget, there has been a lot of conversation about further reduction of financial resources, potential impact to positions due to the funding cuts, and speculation of further changes in human resources. While some or none of these may come to fruition, it is our responsibility to continually look at the services we deliver, without becoming too concerned about what the State may do. As I've said before, and will probably say many times again, Burnett County has the knowledge within

the elected officials and staff to ensure we maintain a high standard of service delivery for our residents, regardless of State changes.

One of the programs started this year, is to reward employees for their creativeness and initiative so as to be more prepared when and if funding cuts occur. Launching the LEEDs program is one way the County is tapping the staff's knowledge. Leadership through Effective and Efficient Designs (LEEDs) provides a financial incentive for employees who think

about the process of their work and come up with solutions to deliver their department services more effectively and/or efficiently. In January, all employees were provided with the program details and deadlines for submission. I look forward to reviewing the ideas of our staff, and implementing the winning idea to make Burnett County more effective and efficient!

- Nate

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## Aging and Disability Resource Center

We have many events and wonderful educational opportunities already planned for 2015!

We have brochures available on the two workshops we are currently promoting, *Living Well with Chronic Conditions* and *Powerful Tools for Caregivers*. They are 6 week evidence based workshops modeled after Stanford University's Chronic Disease Self Management Program.

*Living Well* is open to adults of all ages with one or more chronic health conditions, such

as chronic pain, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, anxiety, high blood pressure, cancer, lung disease, depression, or any other chronic health condition that can interfere with one's life and can be controlled or managed better by living a healthier lifestyle. This class will be offered in the evenings on Thursdays starting April 9th.

*Powerful Tools for Caregivers* is open to any individual who cares for a family member, loved one, friend or neighbor, who

lives at home or in an assisted living/nursing home facility, down the road or across the country. This program helps family caregivers cope with the challenges that come with their role as a caregiver and help them better care for their loved one, and themselves! This workshop will take place from 1-3pm on Thursdays starting May 7th.

Both of these workshops are provided at minimal cost to the participants, at \$10/person. This cost is to help cover the

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price of the book used during the class. Each participant has the option to return their unmarked book at the end of the workshop for their \$10 back. Please stop in and grab some brochures to share and spread the word.

The last educational initiative we are starting is called Tuesday Chats. These are 1 hour presentations/informational meetings on various topics most everyone will face at one point in their life. Our first series is focused on financial and legal topics:

*Scams, Advance Directives and Reverse Mortgages.* We are offering Tuesday Chats twice a month: the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Polk County Government Center and the 4th Tuesday of the month at the Burnett County Government Center from 5-6:00pm. These presentations are free to the public.

These are wonderful programs that we are lucky to be able to provide Polk and Burnett County residents at little to no cost. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! Help us spread the word to friends, co-workers, clients, consumers, and

family. You can even take advantage of these programs!

Jump on our website (<http://www.adrcnwwi.org/>) if you would like more information about the ADRC and what we do. We will also be having an open house in April. This would be another great chance to come visit us and learn more about our agency and the services we provide to Polk and Burnett County residents and the St Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin.

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## County Clerk

Who is the County Clerk and what does the office of the County Clerk do? Many times the County Clerk is confused with the Clerk of Courts. The Clerk of Courts deals with the judicial system within the county. Although they are both elected positions, the County Clerk is responsible for many other statutory duties along with a multitude of other optional duties and responsibilities in the county.

Much of what we do is regulated by Wisconsin Statutes including responsibilities relating to county board supervisors, county board and committee meeting proceedings, preparing and posting meeting agendas, resolution and ordinance record

keeping, recording and the sale of tax deed properties, administration of all elections including Statewide Voter Registration, training and preparation for elections, issuance of marriage licenses, administration of dog licensing, oaths and bonds, record keeping and open record requests, wood cutting notices, census and redistricting management, contracts, leases and agreements, and many other duties associated with filing and record keeping for county operations.

Many responsibilities of the County Clerk's Office are not statutorily mandated. These duties may differ from county to county depending on the needs and structure of each individual

county. In Burnett County our office also does asset management, purchasing and lodging, property and liability insurance, passports and passport photos, all mail and postal related functions, office form set up and printing for departments, meeting room scheduling, county fleet car management, county directory management and printing, and a multitude of other county functions related to the ongoing daily operations of the county as a whole. In many counties the Office of the County Clerk is still referred to as the "Hub Office" of the building because of the variety of responsibilities and duties that assist and work with most departments in the county and with public service.

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## District Attorney

Our insurance carrier, WCA Group Health Trust, offered their clients a Healthy Holiday Challenge in December. They held weekly drawings for a check to donate to the winner's choice of our local food shelf. Burnett County Government Center had many participants

who joined the challenge. Karen Burgett, Mary Doll and Jackie Kurkowski's names were drawn and they each received a \$50.00 check. Karen chose to donate to Ruby's Pantry, Mary chose Connections, and Jackie chose Second Harvest.



Left to right: Jackie Kurkowski, Mary Doll, and Karen Burgett.

## Health & Human Services

February is American Heart Month. Risk Factors for Heart Disease and Stroke That You Can Control are:

**SMOKING.** If you smoke, resolve to quit. Smoking cigarettes puts you at much greater risk for a heart attack, and it's the single greatest cause of preventable death in the United States. Constant exposure to other people's tobacco smoke also increases your risk, even if you don't smoke. If you're a woman who uses birth control pills and you smoke, your risk is even higher. The bottom line: if you don't smoke, don't start. And if you do smoke, quit! When you stop smoking, no matter how long or how much you've smoked, your risk of heart attack drops.

**HIGH CHOLESTEROL.** Know your numbers to know your risk. A simple blood test can show if your blood cholesterol

level is desirable, borderline-high or high.

**HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE.** Have your blood pressure checked each time you visit your doctor. High blood pressure is often called the "silent killer" because it has no symp-



Burnett County wears red for heart disease awareness

toms. After age 64, a much higher percentage of women than men have high blood pressure.

**PHYSICAL INACTIVITY.** Get up and get moving. Nearly 38% of all women are sedentary. The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise every week, which equals 30 minutes

a day for five days. Regular physical activity helps reduce your risk of heart attack, heart disease and stroke.

**OBESITY.** Obesity isn't an appearance issue; it's a health issue. Obesity is a major health problem for all Americans, including children. Among women ages 20 and older, 57.5 percent of non-Hispanic whites, 79.6 percent of non-Hispanic blacks and 74.1 percent of Mexican-Americans are overweight or obese. If you're obese or over-

weight, you have a much higher risk of developing heart disease.

**DIABETES.** Have your glucose levels checked regularly. Scientific research funded by the American Heart Association has shown that Hispanics, African Americans, Native Americans, and Asians (especially South Asians) seem to be more likely to develop type 2 diabetes.

## Highway Department

As January is now in our rear-view mirror we can reflect on how easy the start of the year has been. Remember January 2014? We do. This year the winter plowing activities for January are down 44% from the previous year. With the lack of snow our crews have been busy cleaning up the ROWs and clearing trees that have been encroaching close to the highways and improving vision at the intersecting roads. We have a lot of winter left but let's hope for an early Spring.

As we start our planning for the

summer projects, one of the main projects for 2015 will be the design for improvements on CTH H from Delano Rd to CTH EE located in Roosevelt Township and the Major Improvement Project will be CTH E from CTH A to the Washburn County line located in Scott Township. CTH E will have a new surface with improved drainage systems installed along with an improvement at the intersection of McKenzie Road.

The major project on State Road 35 this year will be the roundabout at the intersection of STH

35 & STH 70 which should start sometime in April and should be completed before October 2015. The highways will remain open without any detours planned. Our neighbors to the west (MN) are planning to improve MN State Highway 70 which will last all summer.

We also would like to welcome our newest member of the Highway Department, Jerome Blatt. Jerome has had many years of experience working for numerous townships performing operations similar to what the Highway Department does.

## Land and Water Conservation

The Annual Conservation Poster Contest was held in February. This competition is an annual event sponsored each year by the Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association (WLWCA) in partnership with the local counties as a part of their "Youth and Education" programming.

Posters submitted are judged at the County level. Those winning 1st place at the County level are then advanced to the Area level, and if winning there, continue on to the State Competition.

All Burnett County posters submitted this year were in the Grade 4 - 6 category. The top places were awarded to: 3rd place, Sadye Bunting; 2nd place

Alexis Slater; and 1st place, Hanne Johnson; all from Grantsburg Middle School. The top 3 placed posters received a certificate of participation, placement ribbons, and Subway gift cards.

Hanne's poster advanced to the Area competition and won 3rd place at that level, where she received a certificate of recognition and a beautiful laser-etched plaque.

This competition's goal is to educate and inspire Wisconsin's youth so they continue to care for our beautiful state, and to help pass on Wisconsin's rich conservation history to future generations.

The Conservation Poster contest is open to kindergarten through twelfth grade students and post-



Left to right: Hanne Johnson, Brent Blomberg, Alexis Slater, Dave Ferris, and Sadye Bunting

ers are evaluated on the following criteria:

- Conservation message
- Visual effectiveness
- Originality
- Universal appeal
- Individual artwork

The poster contest follows the theme from annual Stewardship

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Week celebration as led by the National Association of Conservation Districts. This year's theme "Local Heroes – Your Hardworking Pollinators" had to be incorporated into each

poster in order for the poster to advance on to the next level.

Participation in the Poster Contest can be done as a class project or independently by any student interested in submitting their poster. If you are inter-

ested in participating in this competition, please contact the Burnett County Land & Water Conservation Department at 715.349.2186 or email us at [lwcd@burnettcounty.org](mailto:lwcd@burnettcounty.org).

## IT Department

The new computers for 2015 have been ordered and most have arrived. We decided to do things a little differently this year. First of all, we bought HP computers instead of Dell. Dell, HP, and Lenovo are the major players and we have been exclusively a Dell shop for many years. But Dell has been slowly drifting behind the times. While HP has fully adopted new technologies like solid state disk and disk based encryption as a standard, Dell still charges a premium for solid state disks. The other vendors are also making laptops smaller and lighter every year while Dell charges substantially more for any laptop less than 5 lbs.

Another change that we made was with mobile workers. Rather than having both a desktop and a laptop, we bought only laptops with docking stations. A laptop docking station combination is about \$800 more than a desktop alone, but costs much less than buying both; plus there will be fewer software licenses to buy in the future.

We are also jumping head first into the latest technology. None of our new computers will have a floppy disk, parallel or serial ports, or a cd/dvd drive. All of our laptops are smaller and lighter. Our desktops are small tiny things that will hide on your desk. Each computer was

purchased with a solid state disk which will increase performance and reduce boot time. Each computer was also purchased with a wireless keyboard and mouse and a 24" monitor. I would also like to add that we spent the same or less money than our typical Dell computer setup.

Do not despair if you still need a cd/dvd drive, we bought some external drives to have available. If you have a printer or device that uses serial or parallel, unfortunately you will need to buy something new. USB started being widely adopted in 1998. If you have something that is not at least USB, then it is time to let go.

## Treasurer

Towns and villages have wrapped up their tax collections through January 31. Our office has been importing their final batches of receipts and making sure our records match with the towns and villages. When we are balanced with the town/village, we then calculate the tax settlement. Tax settlement calculations are based on the per-

centage that the town/village has collected through January 31. The town/village will pay out to each taxing jurisdiction their amount of their levy (less the partial settlement made in January) that was included on the tax bills for 2014. Collection percentages range from 55.36% to 62.93%.

Reports that will be filed with the DOR are: the Lottery and Gaming Credit, the First Dollar Credit, and the Tax District Treasurer's Settlement for each town/village. Also a file of the Lottery and Gaming Credits will be forwarded to the DOR for auditing.

## University of Wisconsin-Extension and Tourism

Since October 2014 the Burnett County 4-H Cloverbud project, specifically designed for youth in Kindergarten-2nd grade, has kept kids busy on the second Monday of each month from 6:00-6:45 p.m. So far this 4-H year, we have made 3D paper pumpkins, paper bag snowmen puppets, marshmallow ants, and most recently, paper concentric heart mobiles. Many of these items will be on display at the county fairs this summer. There are currently 24 youth enrolled in this project and at least five youth regularly attend the

monthly meeting. We have two adult volunteers who rotate teaching the classes. If you hear laughter and giggles coming from Room 165 on the second Monday of each month, rest assured they are probably 4-H Cloverbuds, or the adult volunteers, having fun while learning! If you or a young person is interested in joining 4-H, go to <https://www.4honline.com/>.

If you have any questions or need help enrolling online stop by Room 17 to chat with Beth



Cloverbuds from February's meeting with their paper hearts.

## Veterans' Services

This month, we would like to focus on a few changes in benefits for veterans and their families. First is VA Health Care. VA Health Care is still dependent on whether a veteran has service connected disabilities or a veteran's net worth. However, effective January 1, 2015, VA will no longer consider a veteran's assets in determining net worth. Only the veteran's household income minus medical, funeral, and personal education expenses will be considered. Also, if a veteran is in receipt of VA Health Care, s/he meets the requirements of the Affordable Care Act; however, because the IRS will not be notified by the VA of a veteran's en-

rollment in VA Health Care, the veteran must check it off on the income tax form: 1040EZ line 11; 1040A line 38; 1040 line 61.

In the state of Wisconsin, effective January 1, 2015, surviving spouses in receipt of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) are eligible for the WI Veterans and Surviving Spouse Property Tax Credit, provided s/he meets WI residency and remarriage requirements.

The County Veterans Service Officer can assist in applying for these benefits as well as other federal and state veterans benefits.

### February Dates

- 1 Nat'l Freedom Day

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

### March Dates

- 3 Star-Spangled Banner Nat'l Anthem (1931)
- 4 U.S. Constitution Completed (1789)
- 12 GSA founded (1912)
- 18 Operation Iraqi Freedom began (2003)
- 29 WI Vietnam Veterans Day (2009)