



Issue 19

County Administration Newsletter

Vision & Stewardship

October 2015

Administration

It's amazing how quickly time passes, and is hard to believe that I've been working for Burnett County for two years. While one never fully realizes what they are getting into as they begin a new job, I feel as though I was quickly and respectfully welcomed into the organization and the community at large.

As I look back at the last two years, there are a lot of accomplishments that we, as a team, have achieved. Through excellent County Board Supervisors, knowledgeable department heads (elected and appointed), and skilled staff members, we've moved Burnett County forward and are better prepared for future challenges. As we look back over

the last two years, here are just a few of the accomplishments.

Adopted an updated personnel manual

- Resulted in reducing future accrued leave liability by 1/3
- Reduced administrative time processing payroll
- Brought the County in-line with Act 10

Finance

- Updated investment policy
- Expedited the audit process so results are known prior to the budgeting process
- Created and adopted budget guidelines
- Adopted a general fund balance policy that assists the

County in meeting future capital and infrastructure needs

Communication

- Developed a monthly newsletter
- Created the Workplace Enhancement (WE) Committee which provides an opportunity for employees to shape administrative policies

These and many more positive programs and policies occurred because of all of us working together. I look forward to watching the future growth and accomplishments. Thank you all for your dedicated service to the residents of Burnett County.

Emergency Management

Winter storms are considered deceptive killers because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. For example, in the last five years Wisconsin has averaged 18,000 motor vehicle crashes during winter months. On average, 45 people are killed each year and more than 4,700 injured on icy or snow-covered roads. Check the latest weather

reports to avoid driving in a winter storm. You can find out the latest road conditions by visiting the Wisconsin Department of Transportation travel information website at 511wi.gov or by calling 511.

If you're expecting adverse weather during your trip, tell someone at both ends of your journey where you are going

and the route you intend to take. Report your safe arrival. Make certain that both parties have your cell phone number and license plate number before you start your trip. If conditions deteriorate you may want to reschedule your trip.

It is also important to check and

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

winterize your vehicles before the winter season begins. Make sure your car's battery is in good shape – cold temperatures can reduce the effectiveness of a battery by 50 percent. Make sure your tires are suitable for winter driving conditions.

Carry a winter storm survival kit in the back seat of your vehicle (in case your trunk jams or is frozen shut) that includes:

- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Extra hats, socks and mittens
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Shovel, booster cables and windshield scraper
- Water and high-calorie non-perishable food (raisins, candy bars, energy/protein bars)
- Sand or cat litter to use for traction
- Cell phone adapter

Driving Tips from the Department of Transportation:

1. Many crashes are caused by "driving too fast for current conditions." Also, when the first blast of winter arrives, motorists often need to re-learn how to drive in slippery conditions.
2. Be gentle with both the accelerator and brake. Don't use cruise control in wintery conditions. Don't be overconfident in your four-wheel drive vehicle. You may get going quicker than others but you can't stop faster. Four-wheel drive vehicles can lose traction as quickly as two wheel drive.
3. Always wear your safety belt. You and your passengers absolutely need this protection even in low-speed "fender-bender" crashes that frequently occur on slick roads.
4. Leave plenty of room for snowplows. By law, you must stay back at least 200 feet from the rear of a snow-

plow.

5. Obey the "Move Over Law", which requires drivers to shift lanes or slow down in order to provide a safety zone for a law enforcement vehicle, tow truck, ambulance, fire truck, highway maintenance vehicle, or utility vehicle that is stopped on the side of a road with its warning lights flashing.
6. If your vehicle slides off the road, gets stuck, or becomes disabled, stay inside it if at all possible with your seat belt fastened until a tow truck or other help arrives. If you're inside your vehicle and buckled up, you have protection against out-of-control vehicles. There's no protection outside your vehicle.



Forestry and Parks

Ever been driving around through the county forest and noticed a jack pine stand that looks like a bulldozer had gone through and turned up the ground? Ever wondered what the heck are those guys were doing? Well as a matter of fact that is exactly what we have

done. We have gone into these mature jack pine stands and used a bulldozer to turn up the duff layer and expose the bare mineral soil. This is called pre-sale scarification.

When we establish a timber sale and our objective is to regenerate the stand back to Jack pine,

we have only a few options to choose from: tree planting, pre-sale scarification, and post sale scarification with seeding. In many cases we use pre-sale scarification to accomplish natural regeneration of our jack pine stands. After scarifying the jack

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

pine stand, the logger will come in and cut the trees. As part of the contract they are to take the jack pine tops, which hold the cones, and scatter them directly onto the bare mineral soil areas. After this is done the heat from the sun and ground is enough to

open the closed jack pine cone and drop the seed onto the bare soil. These seeds germinate and with the help of decent rain falls, our jack pine stands are back on their way to growing.

We have had great success with this method. It is by far the most cost effective way for us to regenerate our jack pine. It is

about half the cost of tree planting and our success rate over the years has been much higher as well.

So next time you happen to see an area that has been scarified and harvested, continue to watch the site to see if those little green trees start to show up; they will.



Pre-sale scarification...

Cone placement...

...Results

Health & Human Services

HOME VISITING PROGRAM

The Burnett County Home Visiting Program began in 2012 with grant funding from Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council. This grant is part of a statewide Family Foundations Home Visitation Initiative. Our Home Visiting Program is voluntary, with 20 families currently enrolled. The Home Visiting program embraces the approach that babies and young children thrive when they are properly cared for and nurtured by adults. Responsive relationships with consistent primary caregivers help build positive attachments that in turn, support healthy development.

Our referrals come from a variety of agencies within both Burnett and Polk Counties such as Burnett Medical Center and St. Croix Regional Medical Center, following the birth of a baby, but our main referrals are our WIC participants. We work together to ensure that any interested pregnant mother, or mother with a new infant, has the opportunity to meet with one of our staff and learn about the benefits of early intervention and supportive home visitation services.

Some of the visit activities can include: assisting with accessing quality prenatal care; conducting infant screenings and assess-

ments; providing health education; connecting the family to valuable community resources; and offering strategies for parents to support their child's development physically, socially, and emotionally. In a collaborative way, home visitors and the families they serve come up with a set of goals and activities that they work on together, all with the goal of ensuring the healthy development of the child and the well-being of the family.

Research shows that home visits by a nurse, social worker, early childhood educator, or other trained professional during

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

pregnancy and in the first years of life improve maternal and child health, prevent child abuse and neglect, increase positive parenting, and enhance child development and school readiness. Home Visiting supports the key values that parents are active participants in the helping process and all parents have strengths.

Our office is located at the Burnett County Family Resource Center. If you would like more information about the Burnett County Home Visitor Program, please contact us at (715) 349-2922. Follow us on Facebook at Burnett County Family Resource Center.

THE REMEMBER PROJECT

The State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services has a focus that is has received growing attention due to the projected changes with the state's population. You may have heard that the population in Wisconsin is aging as a whole. That is particularly the case in the northwestern portion of the state. As such there have been new projects developed at the state level to address some anticipated issues these changes will bring. One focus is to create Dementia Friendly Communities. This is done by creating an awareness of an increase in the percentage of individuals

with dementia and to educate the community in how to deal with issues that may arise.

To start the awareness there has been a series of skits that have been presented in Burnett County called The Remember Project. If you have not had the opportunity to attend one, there is one coming up in Frederic on November 5th at the Methodist Church. The performances in Burnett County have been well attended and we are hoping to be able to bring them back again next year.

Keep your eyes and ears open as more community education opportunities will be coming your way!

HOME ENERGY PLUS

What is HOME ENERGY Plus?

Home Energy Plus includes the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) and Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). WHEAP provides assistance for heating costs, electric costs, and energy crisis situations. WAP helps renters and homeowners reduce their energy consumption. Operating with federal and state funding, the programs provide energy assistance payments to over 216,000 households and weatherization services to over 6,000 households in Wisconsin each year.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR ENERGY ASSISTANCE AND

WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE?

Your household may be eligible for the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) and Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) based on a number of factors. If your household gross income is less than the amount shown on the following chart, you may be eligible for a benefit or services.

| Household Size | One Month | Three Month | Annual Income |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| 1 | \$2,133 | \$6,400 | \$25,601 |
| 2 | \$2,790 | \$8,370 | \$33,478 |
| 3 | \$3,446 | \$10,339 | \$41,355 |
| 4 | \$4,103 | \$12,308 | \$49,232 |
| 5 | \$4,759 | \$14,277 | \$57,109 |
| 6 | \$5,416 | \$16,247 | \$64,986 |
| 7 | \$5,539 | \$16,616 | \$66,463 |
| 8 | \$5,662 | \$16,985 | \$67,940 |

WHAT IS THE WISCONSIN HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

WHEAP assistance is a one-time payment during the heating season (October 1-May 15). The funding pays a portion of energy costs, but the payment is not intended to cover the entire energy costs of a residence. The amount of the energy assistance payment varies depending on a variety of factors, including the household's size, income, and energy costs. In most cases the energy assistance benefit is paid directly to the household's energy supplier.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

WISCONSIN WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Weatherization Assistance Program helps homeowners and

renters reduce energy consumption while increasing comfort in their homes. Weatherization improvements may also make your home environment healthier and safer. Improvements are installed by the local weatheri-

zation agency in your area.

How to Apply:

Please contact Burnett County Health and Human Services at 715-349-7600.

Highway Department

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the new Highway Commissioner to our organization. Mr. Michael Hoefs is a professional engineer who has been working in this field for the past 13 years. Mike has an extensive background in design and construction engineering and will bring our department to even higher standards. Please call or stop in and say hello.

As the seasons change our workload is kicking into high gear closing out projects and preparing for winter operations, including putting on pre-wet tanks and sanders. A sure sign of the coming winter season is the return to school last Friday of our last college student for the year. He will be missed.

As for myself, this will be my last newsletter article. I will be retiring, and my last day in the

office will be November 10, 2015. I would also like to thank my staff and county supervisors for your support for the past nineteen plus years and hope that you continue your support for the new commissioner. It has been my pleasure to serve Burnett County and residents and I wish continued success in developing the infrastructure and new Highway/Forestry facility.

Land and Water Conservation

We had a beautiful sunny day, on Tuesday, September 22, when Webster, Siren, and Grantsburg students attended the Annual Conservation Day for 5th Graders. This is a day-long event sponsored by the County Natural Resources Committee (NRC) and the County Land & Water Conservation Department (LWCD) that is held at the beautiful Crex Meadows Wildlife Education and Visitor Center in Grantsburg.

The day began at 9:30 a.m. when 175 students, teachers, chaperones, bus drivers, pre-

senters, and staff converged at the Center. The students were provided with introductions to the presenters and instructions on the day's events. After breaking into 7 groups, the kids rotated from session to session to learn about different conservation topics presented by staff from the LWCD, DNR and NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service). The topics were: water quality (Paul Cook - Conservation Specialist), wildlife habitat (Kristi Pupak - Wildlife Educator), soils and erosion (Deanna Peterson - NRCS Conservationist), trees (Mark Gossman - Forest Ranger), geol-

ogy (John Park - rock and mineral authority), forest fire safety (John Furr - Forester), and aquatic invasive species (Kris Larsen - DNR Water Resource Specialist).

During the lunch hour a presentation was given by Chris Spaight, a DNR Conservation Warden from the Grantsburg area.

The kids then completed a quiz on the sessions and were awarded prizes for the top scores. The top 2 from each school were: Olivia McNally and Faith Tharaldson (Grantsburg), Akota Barber and

Nicholas Webster (Siren), and Justin Johnson and Felipe Juarez (Webster). McNally and Johnson won the overall competition for having the best quiz score and answering the question “What does conservation mean to me?”

After the quiz the students participated in a scavenger hunt with the top scoring school winning the highly coveted traveling silver lunch box stuffed full of candy. Grantsburg won the hunt this year and will have possession of the lunchbox until next year.

We would like to congratulate all our competitors on their hard

work, dedication, and commitment to conservation issues.

The LWCD would also like to extend a HUGE thank you to the various departments, individuals, and educators who,

through their commitment to educating our youth, have worked so hard to make this event possible.

Land and Water’s Paul Cook playing The Water Game with area 5th graders at Conservation Day.



Maintenance and Grounds

Recent software upgrades and changes have made some dramatic changes on the way we can remotely operate our HVAC and other building management systems. In the recent past, we could remote into the system from home or if we had a PC with the proper software when away. This allowed us the capability to check, adjust, or in some cases troubleshoot problems without having to come in to see what is going on. As an example for past capabilities, if you are out of town or out and

about and were called about a problem, it was something of a hassle to find a Wi-Fi hotspot to get access for the laptop but it still beat a drive in to adjust an otherwise minor problem.

New software allows us to access the system with an iOS app. So now, when various alarm set points are reached and sent to the mobile device, we have a quicker response with a more portable remote access to the HVAC controls and other monitoring systems. In many cases,

the system alerts us of problems before the end user is even aware there is a problem.

The iOS version does have some limitations – everything is on a tiny screen that has to be zoomed in and out of frequently to see details (I use an iPhone, not an iPad), plus any lengthy typing can be very tedious. However, this is a small price to pay for having a lot less equipment to lug around with improved, faster results and greater convenience.

University of Wisconsin-Extension and Tourism

At 7pm on the second Monday of almost every month you can find a dozen or so young people squeezed into room 162/163.

This amazing group of youth is part of the Burnett County 4-H Junior Leaders group. The youth in grades 6-13 from differ-

ent county 4-H clubs learn about leadership, being role models for younger 4-H members, and how to be productive members

of their clubs, communities, and world.

In September a committee of 4-H adult volunteers organized a Junior Leader recruitment event. The 4-H Amazing Race was held at Crooked Lake Park in Siren. A total of 20 youth attended this event and completed 9 different challenge stations. Youth learned about 4-H facts and tried their hand at croquet, ladder golf, and a hoop and stick game. Youth who participated may even remember how many benches, picnic tables, and pavilions there are in the park because teams had to count those items. This event was a success as the October

Junior Leaders meeting had a big increase in attendance.

If you or a young person is interested in joining 4-H, go to 4honline.com. If you have any questions or need help enroll-

ing, call or stop by Room 17 to chat with Beth Rank or Beth Greiff.



Participants in The 4-H is Amazing Race

Veterans' Services

Congress recently passed legislation directing the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide ID cards to all veterans. What we do know is that there will be a fee for the ID card and that they will look different from the card veterans in the VA Health Care System use so as not to be confused with the Health Care System cards. We have not yet received any guidelines or information about how veterans can obtain ID cards, nor what the cost will be. During a meeting at the VA on 10/22/2015, representatives indicated that the VA isn't even close to releasing guidelines on how that service will work. Keep in mind that WI residents can have the vet-

eran ID included on their Driver's License. Just stop in the Veterans Service Office for a completed MV3010 before you go to the DMV.

Veteran's Choice Cards: there have been some real obstacles and hurdles in this service making it very difficult and user unfriendly. The VA is aware of these issues and is working to improve the service. The biggest thing to know is that the cards are not an insurance card and you cannot use them for ER visits. All appointments must be pre-approved.

The VA continues to move toward a paperless system and encourages all veterans to sign

up for an eBenefits account and a "My HealtheVet" account in order to monitor/manage your service on line. We can assist you in getting started on these accounts here in the Veterans Service Office.

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

October Dates

- 7 Operation Enduring Freedom began (2001)
- 13 Navy Day (1775)

November Dates

- 10 USMC Day (1775)
- 11 Veterans Day