



# Sheboygan County News

*A Newsletter for County Employees*

*www.co.sheboygan.wi.us*

Volume 2, Issue 2

2nd Quarter, 2009

## The State of the State

by Adam Payne, County Administrator

### Inside this issue:

Featured Department 2

Featured Employee 2

Riders Will Roll to Work Again 3

Losses Lessen Loads 3

InHealth Clinic Remains on Track 3

Employee Assistance Program 4

### Inserts:

The State of the State continued

The State of the County

Guaranteed Ride Home Program

### Newsletter Preparation:

Kay Lorenz  
Kortnei Ames  
Michael Collard  
Adam Payne

What a mess. The past decade, I've yet to experience a State biennial budget process that hasn't included a significant deficit. In 2007-2009, it was \$3.2 billion. Now, State officials are projecting \$5.7 billion for 2009-2011. In fact, over the last decade, the State's Unrestricted Net Assets balance has ballooned from a negative \$2.4 billion in 2001, to a negative \$8 billion today. In other words, if you sold your house to pay off all your debts, you would still owe \$8 billion. According to the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, when you factor in our population, state income and apply generally accepted accounting principles, Wisconsin has the largest deficit per person of all 50 States!

Sadly, the State's structural deficit dates back to 1995, and I'm not holding my breath until it gets its own fiscal house in order. Frankly, Democrat or Republican, I'm tired of all the rhetoric. The track record is an embarrassment, and should be unacceptable. Yet, it continues.

As you know, County Government is the right arm of State Government. Sheboygan County is comprised of 34 County Board Supervisors, 22 Departments, nearly 1,000 employees, a \$130 million budget, implementing a broad array of services, nearly 100 of which are mandated by the State.

### Trends in State Funding Discouraging

The State has not met its commitments, and as a result, there has

been an increasing reliance on property taxes to make up the difference. Whether it is the courts, Health and Human Services, or other programs, there has been a growing funding disparity associated with implementing these mandated services. Believe it or not, some mandated programs, such as those associated with our youth, haven't received an increase for over a decade. Yet, costs go up, case loads go up, and state law requires the programs continue.

What makes the situation even more disturbing is the State has disproportionately tapped into County revenue streams. For example, the Clerk of Courts collects County Ordinance citation revenue. Since 1977 for an average citation, the County's portion increased from \$54 to \$68, the State's portion increased from \$3 to \$118.

Yes, the trends are discouraging. The State mandates the programs, does not meet its commitments, in many instances either reduces or holds flat funding, takes more of the revenue the County collects than it allows us to keep, and then, seeks to divert responsibility and attention from itself and points the finger at local government for high property taxes.

It gets worse. We are then notified that the State is going to raise its rates for services such as at State Mental Health Institutions and Juvenile Corrections by double digit increases!

### Short and Long-Term Solutions to Resolve the State Fiscal Mess

If under these extraordinary circumstances 72 counties across the State can somehow manage to balance their budgets, then I believe there is hope for the State.

1) Lead by example—Get your own fiscal house in order, and take responsibility for the programs you have established. The government entity that creates the program should pay for it, or at least follow through on meeting its commitments. Eliminate or change the State mandates if commitments can't be met.

2) Establish an inclusive budget process—Develop a collective Mission, Vision, Goal and Targets. It shouldn't matter if you have a D or R in front of your name. Everyone should be able to understand the importance of balancing the budget.

3) Do not use one time funds for ongoing operations.

4) Establish a self-imposed borrowing limit.

5) Establish a healthy raining day fund.

6) Conduct a program evaluation and prioritization process—Government is good at creating new programs, but poor at evaluating, prioritizing and eliminating what isn't working or no longer a high priority.

(continued on insert)

## County Clerk is at the Core of Government Service

by: Julie Glancey, County Clerk



Life is a great big canvas; throw all the paint on it you can.

Danny Kaye, Entertainer

The County Clerk's office is one of the county's smaller departments. It consists of the County Clerk and three staff members. While small in numbers, the department is responsible for a wide range of programs and services.

Most people associate the County Clerk's office with the issuance of marriage licenses. Sheboygan County issues about 750 marriage licenses a year. While this is probably our most visible responsibility, it is only a very small part of what we do.

Election administration is the most important responsibility in the clerk's office. The County Clerk is responsible for, or integrally involved in, every aspect of the election process, not just for the federal, state, and county offices, but the local municipal and school district offices as well. In addition to compiling the printed ballots, Sheboygan is one of just a few counties in Wisconsin that does their own programming of the election equipment. While this is a very time consuming process, it saves the county, municipalities, and school districts between \$50,000 and

\$100,000 a year in consulting fees. The federal Help America Vote Act of 2002 required states to create and maintain a State-wide Voter Registration System (SVRS). While voter registration is technically the responsibility of the Municipal Clerk, we provide this service for 20 of the 28 municipalities in the county who are unable to meet the criteria established by the state.

Property/Liability Insurance and telephone administration are also major areas of responsibility for our department. We coordinate the purchase of insurance policies, handle claims, and maintain the list of the \$240+ million in County property to be insured. For the telephone system, we audit and allocate the monthly phone bills, maintain and program the voice mail system, coordinate the addition or relocation of telephone lines, and administer the Centrex features on approximately 700 county telephone lines.

The County Clerk also provides the secretarial support for the County Board and its committees. We are the gatekeeper of all meeting agenda postings to insure that they comply with the open meeting laws. We also maintain the

County Board documents, meeting calendar, agendas and minutes on the county's web site.

In addition to County Board records, the clerk is the official record keeper for many unrelated items as well, such as Coroner's dockets, old school records, foreclosure notices, wood cutting permits, probate claim notices, and dog license records. We also sell conservation licenses, and have recently started processing passport applications. In 2007 we generated over \$50,000 in revenue for this service and while that number was reduced to just under \$30,000 in 2008, it is still a worthwhile endeavor for our department as all revenue generated directly reduces our need for tax levy.

Last, but not least, in 2010 and 2011 the Clerk's office will once again be working on the decennial census and redistricting process.



## Rousse Seeks Tranquility in a Full Life

by Cheryl Rousse, Deputy Clerk



I was born in Two Rivers, and relocated to Sheboygan by way of West Virginia. After graduating from South High, I completed a 2-year course at LTC in Cosmetology and have been a Licensed Cosmetologist since 1969, practicing for 24 years. In 1998, I began my employment with Sheboygan County in the County Clerk's office as County Board Secretary. I was promoted to Deputy County Clerk in 2006.

I have two sons—Adam lives in Madison and Ben lives in Sheboy-

gan with his wife Jeni, and I have two wonderful grandchildren, Elizabeth (17) and Devin (14).

My hobbies are crocheting, photography and painting, and I have won ribbons at the Sheboygan County Fair in many categories. My favorite pastime, though, is reading. I have seven bookcases in my apartment filled with varying topics from Crystals and Chakras to Feng Shui, Stephen King, history and biographies. I am a member of a discussion group that covers subjects from life's purpose to why we

are here. I also search for peace of mind and tranquility through meditation. I enjoy being outside in summer, walking through the parks with my camera and simply enjoying the solitude.

I've had many pets in the past and currently have an 18-year-old Chinchilla as well as two cats, Pyewacket and Bailey, that I rescued from local shelters in the past few years, one of them with special needs. They keep me smiling!

# Riders Will Roll to Work Again!

by Aaron Brault, NMTTP Project Specialist



As part of the Sheboygan County Non-motorized Transportation Pilot Program (NMTTP), we will again be organizing Bike & Walk to Work Week (BWTWW) to coincide with the national event. Sheboygan County along with employers throughout the country will be encouraging their employees to bike, walk, skip, trot, or rollerblade during the week of May 16th through May 22nd. The benefits of biking or walking to work are endless. A few of the benefits are that you'll be healthier, have more money in your pocket and become more familiar with your community.

We will again be hosting our commuter challenge between Sheboygan County, City, and School District employees. Awards will be given for:

- Entity's total mileage divided by total num-

- ber of employees (traveling trophy)
- Longest commute by bicyclist (gift certificate)
- Longest commute by walker (gift certificate)
- Most mileage by bicyclist (gift certificate)
- Most mileage by walker (gift certificate)
- One random drawing among all participants not winning an above award (gift certificate)

When the time comes, you can email Aaron Brault at [braulacb@co.sheboyganwi.us](mailto:braulacb@co.sheboyganwi.us) with your mileage results, or you can visit our BWTWW website at [www.co.sheboygan.wi.us/bwtww](http://www.co.sheboygan.wi.us/bwtww) to log your mileage and continue to find more information.

Remember, we now have a Guaranteed Ride Home Program to take care of those "what-if" situations (see insert). Also, if you live a far distance away, we have designated points around town where co-workers can meet to

walk or bike the remaining distance. Check out the website for locations.

As an added bonus, BWTWW coincides with National Employee Health & Fitness Day, and will be an easy way to keep your momentum going from the County's "Lighten Your Load" weight loss challenge.

Please consider participating. Last year, the City beat us and proudly hung the traveling trophy in the lobby at City Hall. Let's win it back!

If you have any questions, please contact Mary Ebeling or Aaron Brault in the County Planning & Resources Department at 459-3060.

## Employee Wellness—Losses Lessen Loads

by Michael Collard, Human Resources Director

Sheboygan County's newest wellness challenge is now well under weight. Thirteen employee teams and another 43 individual entrants are vying to see who can lose the most weight from February 5 through May 7. Since no County employee should ever be called a "loser", our program is called "Lighten Your Load."



employees have been receiving regular emails from Nila Born, office supervisor for the Register of Deeds and Wellness Committee member, filled with helpful tips about effective and healthy ways to lose weight.

To track their losses, weigh-ins are also available weekly at the InHealth Clinic and at Rocky Knoll. Those who weighed in on March 2 had already lessened their loads by a combined total of 152 pounds.

When the program concludes in May, the teams and individuals with the highest percentage of weight loss will be awarded prizes funded through entry fees.

The nearly 100 participating

## InHealth Clinic Remains on Track

by Michael Collard, Human Resources Director

The Sheboygan County InHealth Clinic, located at 615 Pennsylvania Avenue, has closed its books on a successful start in 2008. During its first seven months of operation, the clinic provided to health plan members:

- 811 separate office visits/procedures
- 689 immunizations
- 856 other labs
- 199 health risk assessments

The direct savings realized by these services was well over \$30,000 to the County in addition to the savings to employees who were not charged for deductibles or co-insurance. The clinic is now operating at a level that is sufficient to pay for the wellness program, which includes health coaching, education, and wellness events, as well as the health risk assessments.

Call 547-4210 to make your appointment at the InHealth Clinic.



# Aurora EAP is There for You!

Sheboygan County provides an Employee Assistance Program which is available to all employees and family members residing in the households of employees. The EAP makes available a wide range of services to help you deal with a variety of situations; yet, relatively few employees take advantage of this program. Perhaps answers to a few questions will help.

When should you use EAP? This varies with the individual. However, you may wish to seek help when a problem:

- √ occupies too much of your time,
- √ interferes with normal activities, or
- √ persists for more than 2-3 weeks.

What kinds of problems can EAP help with? Probably more than you think. What about:

- √ Budget and Debt Management
- √ Elder Care Information and Referral
- √ Child Care Concerns
- √ Legal Consultation

- √ Anxiety or Depression
- √ Alcohol or Drug Abuse
- √ Workplace Stress
- √ Marital Conflict
- √ Relationship Issues
- √ Financial Pressures
- √ Balancing Work and Family

How do you contact EAP? Just call 414-257-2124 or 800-236-3231, or visit the web site at [www.AuroraHealthCare.org/goto/eap](http://www.AuroraHealthCare.org/goto/eap).

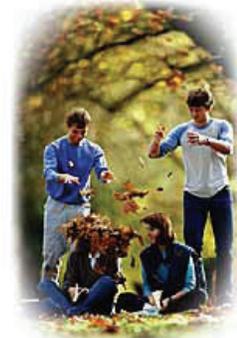
What happens next? An EAP specialist will listen to your concerns and ask you relevant questions. Based on your needs, he or she may:

- √ connect you with a professional counselor
- √ schedule an assessment, or
- √ link you with a specialist in one of Aurora's work-life services.

Will my supervisor know about my EAP

contact? Absolutely not. Your privacy is protected by both federal and state law. The only exceptions are the very rare cases where an employee is required (in advance) to provide a report to the employer as a condition of his or her job.

Should I be embarrassed that I need help? Of course not. Virtually everyone experiences stresses and problems at various points in their lives.



# MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

## 2nd Annual ALL EMPLOYEE PICNIC

### THURSDAY, AUGUST 13th at the Airport!

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY  
508 NEW YORK AVENUE  
SHEBOYGAN, WI 53081

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
SHEBOYGAN, WI  
PERMIT NO 116

### ~State of the State...continued~

- 7) Establish a committee of bargaining and non-bargaining employees to recommend health insurance plan design changes.
- 8) Consolidate departments and share resources/services—In the past 9 years, Sheboygan County has consolidated or co-located Register in Probate with the Clerk of Courts; Printing Department with Information Systems; the Comprehensive Health Care Center and Sunny Ridge with Rocky Knoll; UW-Extension with UW-Sheboygan; Real Property Listing with the Treasurer's Office; Land and Water with Planning, and sharing our Purchasing Agent with the City of Sheboygan.
- 9) Be open to new ideas and new approaches.
- 10) Change approach and culture—Focus time and attention on what is best for the people of Wisconsin, not what is best for the party.

Will these steps help short and long term to getting the State Fiscal House in Order? You bet. It has worked for many Counties and local units of government across the State, and in Sheboygan County. Despite the tremendous fiscal pressures we are challenged with, we have delivered for six consecutive years a levy percentage change that was less than the year before, and most recently, two consecutive property tax levy reductions.

#### **Difficult Days Ahead For the State and Sheboygan County**

Unfortunately, our successful property tax levy trend will likely end. The Governor is proposing a \$1.3 million negative impact/reduction in State revenue for Sheboygan County in 2010. This equates to 3% of our total 2009 levy. Like it or not, we will be part of the solution, and we will need to prepare accordingly.

### ~State of the County~

Despite the ongoing challenges associated with the State fiscal deficit and lack of support, Sheboygan County has become a leader of providing responsive and cost-effective local government. We have healthy fiscal reserves, an excellent bond rating, and hard-working, caring staff who are effectively meeting the demands of providing high quality services in a fiscally responsible manner.

As you know, the State of the State will significantly impact our operations and future budgets. However, we have a highly effective budget process and have made good decisions in the past that will help us be successful in the future. The Sheboygan County Board is already preparing accordingly by once again evaluating and prioritizing discretionary programs County-wide (initially done in 2005), which will be an important component of our budget process. In all likelihood, some discretionary programs the County Board established will have to be reduced or eliminated in order to fund State mandated programs.

In addition, though the County has a long and responsible track record of balancing its budget, and more recently, two consecutive years of providing property tax relief (the only County in the State to do so), this achievement will likely come to an abrupt end. The mounting pressure from citizens in need to provide more services, and what will likely be over a \$1 million funding reduction from the State, has put the County Board and all who work here in a difficult position.

We must continue our efforts to be more efficient and effective, do more with less, and work smarter. We also will have to stop providing some services, so others can continue. Together, we will work to be a part of the solution, and together, we will problem-solve and persevere. I trust you share my pride in being a part of Sheboygan County Government, and recognize that people are hurting throughout our community and that we need to establish priorities and do the best we can.

To conclude on a more upbeat note, the following is a list of some recent accomplishments working our way up to number one, which I like to refer to as... **What Have You Done for Me Lately?**

- 10 **Marsh Tower** – Hundreds of people have contributed money for the construction of the tallest wooden observation tower in Wisconsin so visitors and students alike can better view the ecological splendor of the Broughton Sheboygan County Marsh. Combined with a remote controlled video camera and a web-based Internet camera mounted high atop the tower, this unique structure will draw many more visitors to the Marsh to learn about and appreciate this great natural treasure. The tower will be constructed by year end.
- 9 **Combined Dispatch Plan** – Following years of study and discussion, the County Board adopted Resolution No. 31 supporting the concept of combined dispatch and entering negotiations with the City for a shared Communication Centers Dispatch Manager.
- 8 **Shared Purchasing Agent** – In January 2009, the City and County began a new chapter in City/County relations with the agreement to share the services of the County Purchasing Agent for a 6-month trial period. The City reimburses the County for ½ of the costs related to this position. With the sharing of this position, both the City and County will realize substantial annual cost savings which can be redirected to other budgetary needs, and better identify more areas to collaborate and share resources.
- 7 **Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) Move to the Ag Building** – Later this year, the ADRC will be pulling up stakes and moving its operation to the Agriculture Services Center in Sheboygan Falls, relieving the County of the lease payment for office space at the former Baxter Building and reallocating \$168,000 for direct care services.
- 6 **Consolidation of Real Property Listing into Treasurer's Office** – Remodeling of the Treasurer's Office preceded the early January re-location of two Real Property Listing employees into the Treasurer's Office, streamlining the flow of tax-related functions.
- 5 **Co-Location of Land & Water Conservation with Planning & Resources** – The Land & Water Conservation Department, now co-located with Planning and Resources in the Administration Building, will allow better interdepartmental coordination, easier joint field visits, improved communication, sharing of equipment and maintenance costs, improved access to County computer services, and enhanced secretarial coverage for both departments.
- 4 **Morgan Aircraft Airport Development** – Morgan Aircraft plans to break ground this spring for their initial 22,500 square foot facility at the Airport. The facility may ultimately be expanded to encompass 14 acres and employ up to 2,000 people.
- 3 **InHealth Employee Wellness Clinic** – The InHealth Clinic, staffed by a nurse practitioner and operated by Interra Health, opened in June 2008. This clinic provides basic health care as well as health coaching and wellness programs. During its seven months of operation in 2008, the clinic handled 763 total office visits from County employees and dependents, resulting in over \$30,000 in direct savings to the County's health plan in addition to the savings to employees who were not charged for deductibles or co-insurance.
- 2 **Second Consecutive Property Tax Reduction** – For the second time in 22 years, the County Board reduced the property tax levy. We were the only county out of 72 counties in the state to do this two years in a row. 2009 marks the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that the County's annual levy percentage change has decreased, and the 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that the County tax rate has been reduced. We remain one of ten counties in the state that does not have a ½% sales tax.
- 1 **People in Need** – Due to the current state of the economy, the Division of Economic Support in the Health & Human Services Department is serving people in unprecedented numbers. For example, over the past 12 months, requests for FoodShare (food stamps) have increased 35%, or by more than 2,000 individuals. We have hardworking, caring, dedicated staff throughout Sheboygan County.

# Sheboygan County Guaranteed Ride Home Program—Now Available

## What is it?

- A guaranteed ride home for those Sheboygan County employees who bike, walk, carpool, or ride transit to work and face an emergency situation during the workday.

*Why? →*

*Promotes a Healthy Lifestyle* →

## Who's eligible?

- All Sheboygan County employees residing in Sheboygan County.

## How does it work?

The GRH would be available to those employees who bicycle, walk, carpool, or ride transit to work where:

- A family member suffers an emergency requiring an immediate response.
- A serious problem arises at their child's school or daycare center
- Their home or property is damaged by burglary, fire, etc.
- They become sick during the workday
- Their ridesharing partner has an emergency and they have no way to get home
- Unscheduled, approved overtime
- You **cannot** use it if you do not feel like biking or walking home

The GRH program is sponsored and paid for by the Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program.

↓  
*One of the top reasons people do not bike or walk to work is the “What if” scenario. A GRH solves this issue.*

Employees may **NOT** use the GRH for the following reasons:

- Personal errands
- Medical or dental appointments
- Building evacuations
- Business travel
- Job related injuries
- Transit problems (the transit provider is responsible for providing another bus)
- Missed bus, carpool or vanpool ride home
- They don't feel like it
- Other reasons deemed invalid by program administrator

## What happens?

- If a situation arises, call a cab or take transit. Keep the receipt and send it along with your voucher into the Planning Department, Attn: Aaron, for reimbursement. You are eligible to do this **four** times a year, or up to \$100 per year.

See the below website for more detailed information:

[http://www.co.sheboygan.wi.us/html/d\\_planning\\_nonmotorized\\_project.htm](http://www.co.sheboygan.wi.us/html/d_planning_nonmotorized_project.htm)

**GUARANTEED RIDE HOME VOUCHERS**

(1) NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT & EMPLOYEE ID# \_\_\_\_\_

REIMBURSAL AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_

REASON FOR EMERGENCY RIDE\* \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF SERVICE \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please keep this description general (i.e., medical emergency, home emergency, child emergency, etc.).  
Send completed voucher to the Planning & Resources Department, Attn: Aaron, for reimbursement.

-----  
(2) NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT & EMPLOYEE ID# \_\_\_\_\_

REIMBURSAL AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_

REASON FOR EMERGENCY RIDE\* \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF SERVICE \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please keep this description general (i.e., medical emergency, home emergency, child emergency, etc.).  
Send completed voucher to the Planning & Resources Department, Attn: Aaron, for reimbursement.

-----  
(3) NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT & EMPLOYEE ID# \_\_\_\_\_

REIMBURSAL AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_

REASON FOR EMERGENCY RIDE\* \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF SERVICE \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please keep this description general (i.e., medical emergency, home emergency, child emergency, etc.).  
Send completed voucher to the Planning & Resources Department, Attn: Aaron, for reimbursement.

-----  
(4) NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT & EMPLOYEE ID# \_\_\_\_\_

REIMBURSAL AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_

REASON FOR EMERGENCY RIDE\* \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF SERVICE \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please keep this description general (i.e., medical emergency, home emergency, child emergency, etc.).  
Send completed voucher to the Planning & Resources Department, Attn: Aaron, for reimbursement.