



*Office of County Administrator  
County of La Crosse, Wisconsin*

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**Memo To: La Crosse County Board of Supervisors**  
**From: Steve O'Malley, County Administrator**  
**Date: June 2, 2011**

**Re: June Monthly Report to the County Board**

Attached is the June Monthly Report to the County Board, providing monitoring information about department activities to the full County Board instead of reporting only to governing committees.

**REMINDER** **Monthly Reporting by roughly half the organization every other month.** While you will receive this report each month, the reports do not cover every department each time.

February, April, June, August, Oct. & Dec.

Planning, Resources & Development  
Public Works & Infrastructure  
Judiciary & Law Enforcement  
Corp Counsel & Child Support

January, March, May, July, September, November

Health & Human Services  
Aging & Long Term Care  
County Clerk, Finance, IT,  
Printing, Personnel, Treasurer

**“OF INTEREST”**

La Crosse County received Wellness award

As a part of the Pioneering Healthy communities initiative to acknowledge local employers for achievement in promoting healthy lifestyles in the workplace, the YMCA has recognized La Crosse County with the “Well Workplace Award”. The award acknowledges a Gold Standard toward a well workplace. La Crosse County is one of five local employers to be recognized.

Joint Finance Committee continues work on State Budget

The Joint Finance Committee may have their work completed this weekend on the State Budget and predictions are that it will be adopted next week. I will report on the status of the State Budget as we know it at the Monday Policy Planning meeting.

Policy Planning Meeting, Monday June 6, 2011

There will be several important issues on this agenda for consideration and action:

- Presentation on the County Juvenile Detention Facility
- The update of the County Zoning ordinance

*If you have any questions, feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail.*

*County Administrator direct line: 785-9789, cell phone 608-385-3316  
or e-mail [steve.omalley@co.la-crosse.wi.us](mailto:steve.omalley@co.la-crosse.wi.us)*

# **MONTHLY REPORT TO THE COUNTY BOARD**

## **Planning, Resources & Development Committee June 2011**

### **Department of Land Conservation**

The Department of Land Conservation is beginning another construction season with the installation of several conservation projects. Program funding from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the DNR has been reduced with State budget reductions but there still remains local demand from farm owners and operators to install conservation measures. The cost-share assistance monies we do have are first offered to those County farmers who are enrolled in the State Farmland Preservation Program. Those who participate in this tax credit program must also be in compliance with the State's agricultural performance standards and prohibitions. The Department of Land Conservation uses the funds to pay 70-90% of the eligible total costs to install the required conservation practices.

The La Crosse County Land and Water Resource Management Plan is due for revision by December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The LWRM plan is a five year implementation work plan that sets soil and water quality improvement goals and objectives for the Department. The revision process requires public involvement during the plan development phase. Citizen Advisory Committees for both agricultural and urban issues will be organized to receive input and guidance during LWRM plan development. The 2007-2011 Land and Water Resource Management Plan can be viewed at the La Crosse County website by searching for Departments and clicking on Land Conservation.

The Planning, Resources and Development Committee is considering the future of one of the flood control structures located in the Coon Creek Watershed in southeast La Crosse County. Coon Creek Structure #33 was built 50 years ago as one of 28 flood control structures in the watershed to provide flood relief for the village of Coon Valley. The structure itself remains in good repair and performs in accordance with design requirements. There is concern regarding the type of bedrock that the structure was built on 50 years ago. Drilled cores into the bedrock at the base of the structure and along the abutments indicate the presence of a highly fractured and permeable sandstone that is believed to be the result of some dam failures reported in neighboring counties in the past. The future of the structure will be discussed at length to determine the best cost-effective options that protect public health and safety while providing flood relief for downstream property owners. The Department of Land Conservation is working with the La Crosse County Emergency Management Department to develop an Emergency Action Plan in case the dam is placed in a potential failure condition from heavy rainfall and runoff events.

*Gregg Stangl, Director  
Land Conservation*

## **County Surveyor**

**SCANNING PROJECT:** We continue to scan, rename and index survey maps located in the County Surveyor files. This spring we focused our efforts on maps found in the files for the Towns of Holland and Onalaska. Many of the maps which were previously scanned, along with the Section and Quarter corner tie sheets are available on the County Surveyor Department section of the County website. We have also started a digital imaging (scanning) pilot project, scanning County highway right of way maps in the Town of Washington. We hope to develop an Excel spreadsheet for these map scans so that they can be incorporated into the La Crosse County Geographic Information System (GIS).

**PROJECTS FOR OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS:** We are working to assist the **Facilities Department** to locate the monuments at the corners of the Forest Preserve in Sections 4 and 5, T18N, R5W in the Town of Farmington. The **County Highway Department** is in the process of resurfacing roads where the location of a number of survey monuments were endangered. Those roads include: CTH "V" from CTH "TT" East to CTH "T" (*Sections 14, 15, 16 20 and 21, T18N, R7W, Towns of Holland and Farmington*) and CTH "EE" from STH "162" Northerly to CTH "T" (*Sections 3, 4 & 10, T17N, R5W, Town of Burns and Sections 28, 29 & 33, T18N, R5W, Town of Farmington.*) Existing monuments have been referenced out and once this road work is complete, these locations will be remonumented. We have also been notified that portions of CTH "SN" in the City of Onalaska and CTH "B" in the City of La Crosse will see upgrades and we'll be working to protect survey monument locations within these projects as well.

**CERTIFIED SURVEY MAP AND PRELIMINARY PLAT REVIEW:** So far in 2011, we have had 22 Certified Survey Maps submitted for review. Of these 22 maps, 14 are located in the unincorporated areas of La Crosse County and are subject to a review fee of \$50. We have also reviewed three preliminary plats since the beginning of the year.

**SECTION AND QUARTER CORNER VISITS:** We continue our annual effort to visit a minimum of 5% of our Section and Quarter corner locations throughout the County. This year we are concentrating on the monument locations in T17N, R5W in the Town of Burns.

**ONGOING RESPONSE:** We continue to respond to the public, other County Departments and other governmental agencies to assist them with surveying and land ownership questions. These interactions take place via e-mail, telephone and face-to-face visits and can illustrate some very unique situations and raise some interesting and complex questions. We continue the intake of Plat of Survey maps submitted for filing in the County Surveyor files.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bryan Meyer  
La Crosse County Surveyor

## **Register of Deeds**

We are still having minor issues with the new State Vital Records program. We went live with the new program on Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>. It involves issuing vital records from the computer instead of from our books. Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> started the birth certificate portion. They anticipated beginning the death records some time in 2011 but that has been pushed back to 2012 or possibly 2013 because of the problems arising with the birth portion. There have been an assortment of problems ranging from reports not printing correctly, pulling up birth certificates for other counties (which we are not suppose to have access to), in correct calculations, search problems, etc. We have been doing double entry by putting every vital

record issued from this office in the new SVRIS system & in our IDOC real estate program because the IDOC system has much better reports & it is a double check for the entire office. If our money does not balance at the end of the day, we know that something did not get put in correctly or may have been omitted entirely from one system or the other. We can also double check the break down of the money distribution between the different funds. If a marriage or death accidentally gets put in as a birth the county will lose money on the fund split. So the double entry while time consuming, is an excellent double check system well worth the time it takes.

On May 12<sup>th</sup> I attended our district meeting in Alma at the Buffalo County Courthouse. It was a very informative meeting and it is a good way to keep on top of what is going on with forms, legislation, problems in offices, appointments, conferences, etc.

Our redaction project is set to begin on Tue. May 31st with Fidlar/US Imaging coming into our office to scan real estate books, grantor/grantee indexes, tract indexes and other misc. books back to 1935 when the social security program began. By doing the grantor/grantee & tract indexes, it will make it much easier for our online customers to "find" documents & do searches themselves. This phase of the project is expected to take 2-3 weeks to complete. Those images will then be imported into our online system & sent to Fidlar's crowdforce program for eyes on redaction of social security numbers. The projects are being funded by the social security redaction money that is set aside with each document that we record per legislation passed last July. No general fund money is being used for any of the imaging projects.

#### 2011 statistics

	Birth Certificates	Death & Marriage Certificates	Real Estate Documents	Total Revenue
Jan.	428	1417	2038	\$ 50,549.12
Feb.	429	1079	1510	\$ 46,560.96
Mar.	495	1046	1519	\$ 51,874.28
April	514	1304	1345	\$ 45,518.11

*Cheri McBride*

*La Crosse County Register of Deeds*

## **Facilities Department**

### **Campus**

- LEC Addition Dedication was held on Thursday, May 19, 2011. Chairman Doyle, Judge Levine, Sheriff Helgeson and Supervisor Burke spoke at the dedication with about 50 people in attendance. The Facilities Department continues to work on small items to finish up the addition project.

### **Parks and Campgrounds**

- Both Goose Island and Veterans Memorial Campground opened April 15<sup>th</sup> as planned.
- The spring floods have given park staff many challenges in regards to preparation and cleanup at Goose Island. The river level continues to stay high and is expected to rise again before Memorial Day. We still have a number of seasonal campers at

Goose Island on alternate campsites as their seasonal site is still not suitable for camping use.

- Mississippi River cleanup was held Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. From the looks of the dumpster at Goose Island it was another successful event as the dumpster was very full with debris that was collected from the river banks.
- Veterans Memorial Campground has had a great start so far this year. Jim Stavlo was promoted to Crew Leader to replace Mark Koenig who retired last year. Mike Bangsberg was just recently selected to replace Jim Stavlo as Parks Maintenance Worker and is transferring in from the Highway Department.
- Park Shelter Season opened May 1<sup>st</sup>. Our reservations have been steady. Goose Island Shelters 1, 2, 3 and 4 are now open and usable.
- The Mindoro Park Timber Harvest is planned for late fall. The Public Works & Infrastructure Committee approved the bid in the amount of \$16,130 from Meister Log & Lumber Company at their May meeting.
- There are a number of events planned in our County Parks this year. The La Crosse Fitness Festival used Neshonoc Swarthout Park along their bike race route on April 30<sup>th</sup>. June Dairy Days Run will utilize Neshonoc Swarthout Park as part of the five mile race route on June 4. The YMCA will be holding two events at Neshonoc Swarthout Park – the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Got Energy La Crosse Area YMCA/Touchstone Energy Triathlon scheduled for June 12<sup>th</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual WAVE Open Water Swim Event scheduled for August 13<sup>th</sup>. The Hmong New Year Festival will be held again this year at the Veterans Memorial Park on October 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>.

*Mary Kaufmann*

*Parks/Office Supervisor*

## **Metropolitan Planning Organization**

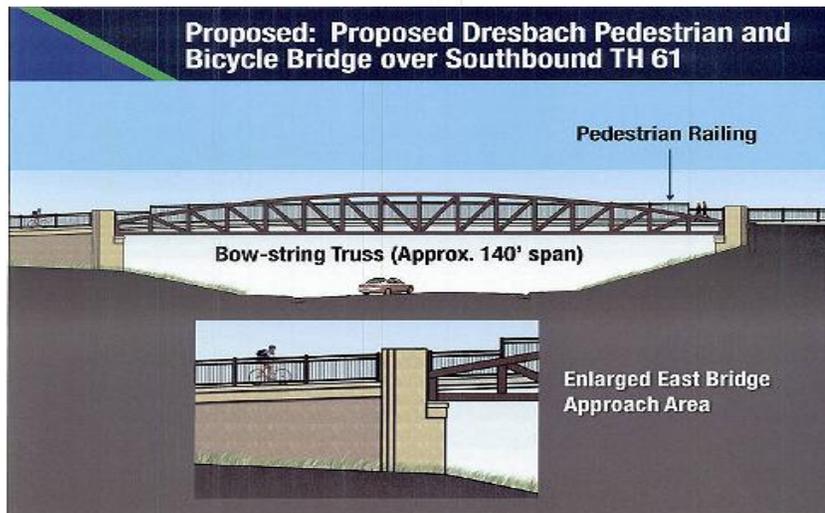
Planning continues for the I-90 Dresbach Bridge replacement. This month I'd like to follow up on bicycle/pedestrian planning for the bridge and I-90 USH 14/61 interchange replacements.

Since the La Crosse and La Crescent areas are determined to be bicycle friendly areas and bicycle tourism destinations, I have worked quite a bit with Mn/DOT to include accommodations in the design of the new interchange.

USH 14/61 between the Dresbach Bridge and La Crescent (and beyond) is part of the Mississippi River Trail, a designated, primarily on-road bicycle trail all the way from Minnesota to New Orleans. North of the bridge the Mississippi River Trail follows "Old 61," an off-road trail to Dresbach, to link back up with USH 61 north.

Currently, bicycle traffic through the I-90 USH 14/61 interchange has to cross high speed vehicle traffic entering and exiting I-90. This is an unsafe situation which will be addressed in the new design. New paths and bridges will carry bicycle traffic under the I-90 eastbound ramps and over the USH 14/61 ramps bound for La Crescent. Mn/DOT is to be commended for adding over \$2,000,000 worth of bicycle/pedestrian accommodations to this project.

This picture shows the areas (highlighted in yellow) where bicycle paths will be included. The bridge over the USH 14/61 ramp is shown in the next picture.



Planning for accommodations on the interstate bridge is more problematic. Bicycles and pedestrians are not allowed on interstate highways. However, there are many bicycle advocates who feel that a Mississippi River crossing at the Dresbach Bridge would connect the Minnesota and Wisconsin trail systems and create another bicycling destination in our area. Mn/DOT has determined that the greater than \$10,000,000 cost of a facility attached to the bridge is not cost effective at this time. The MPO regional bicycle plan recommends that Mn/DOT spend the funds now to include design and engineering for a potential future trail, especially since the new bridge has a 75 to 100 year life span. Discussions continue, with a decision to be made before construction starts in 2012.

*Submitted by  
Tom Faella*

## **Zoning, Planning and Land Information Department**

**Ordinance Update:** The Planning Resources and Development Committee and staff continue drafting an update of the Zoning Ordinance. We have completed a public hearing draft after meeting again with the Committee and the Towns Association Unit. A draft is currently available on the web site. We have proceeded to intense public comments. A moratorium has been placed on new billboards in La Crosse County. This may have an effect on the drafting of the sign portion of this ordinance. We will learn direction on this portion of the draft ordinance at our next committee meeting.

**Farmland Preservation:** We are required to update the current Farmland Preservation Plan to obtain Certification by the State by the end of this year, (2011) and are pursuing a draft of the update of the farmland preservation plan through the Farmland Preservation Committee. We completed a first round of public input meetings and have a draft document and Farmland preservation Areas mapped. We will be pursuing certification of this plan by DATCP soon. The proposed amendments in the upcoming state budget approvals will have an effect on the tools available for farmland preservation.

**Redistricting Committee:** Recommendation of 29 board members has been approved by the County Board.

**Recent Weather Events and Activities:** Staff has dealt with the potential flooding of 2011 very efficiently. The data available to us using recent aerial photos and LiDAR was valuable in evaluating the threat of the flood and providing information to agencies dealing with situations. Recently we received significant damage to some property on the southwest side of the county during a tornado/high wind event. Staff is assisting with the expediting of permits to assist these landowners get back to a normal life. Most of the damage was within the City of La Crosse.

*Charlie Handy*  
*County Planner*

## **UW-Extension**

- The youth education classes in La Crosse County, such as Meat Animal Quality Assurance and Sheep/Beef Education Sessions, offered this spring have taught youth better care and management practices for the animals they are raising as well as ethics for showing their animals at the fair. More than 100 youth have participated in these educational sessions. (SDH)
- A farmer training on new OSHA regulations for dairy farms took place in April to educate local producers about employee management and rights. Two presentations were also given to local elementary classes in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades, on soils and grain storage safety respectively. (SDH)
- 4-H Afterschool provided programs to over 500 youth at Franklin, Hamilton and North Woods Elementary, and Logan Middle during the 2010-2011 School Year. The programs offered reinforce and compliment the school's academic program. Math, Reading and Science are three core academic subjects that are enhanced in the program. (JH)

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual IW2K! (I Want to Know) Science, Engineering and Technology Camp offered sessions in Rocketry, GPS, Chemical Reactions and Wind Power. Middle School youth evaluation results showed that 95% of those attending rated the sessions as Excellent or Good and nearly 70% of the youth are considering a career in the Science, Engineering or Technology fields as a result of the camp. (RM)
- UW-Extension Family Living Agents in La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau, and Vernon Counties, in partnership with Western Technical College offered the first of a three part training on Food Preservation via the Interactive Television (ITV). The trainings are designed for individuals planning to sell home-canned products without obtaining a license as provided in WI Act 101, with the first session covering the new law and researched based information on preserving jams and jellies. UW-Extension is identified in the bill as the agency to provide information and technical services and support for those planning to preserve low-acid and acidified food products and sell at farmers markets. (MMS)
- WNEP staff conducted nutrition classes at the Holmen Learning Center every month during the school year. At the conclusion of the series, 100% (8/8) said that they learned something new about healthy eating and saving money on food that they plan to use in the next month or so. (SH)
- Stretching Food Dollars trainings conducted by WNEP for residents of the Salvation Army included topics such as shopping tips, inexpensive meal ideas, and ways to reduce waste. Participants completed an evaluation that indicated that 86% (32/37) learned a variety of foods they could keep at home to make a meal out of when other food was not available. (SH)
- Facilitated a Strategic Planning session for the Women's Fund of Greater La Crosse. This organization asked for assistance in articulating the organizations goals for the next three years. At the end of the session, a list of recommended goals were developed, and assigned to the six various committees within the organization.(KG)
- Completed the facilitation with the Human Services Department's Crisis On-Call Team. Recommendations were presented to the Human Services Department managers on May 16<sup>th</sup>, with the full report displaying three alternative models for handling the call volume of the Crisis-on-Call services. The recommended model anticipated a cost savings of \$76,000 annually.(KG)

JH – Jenny Holm, 4-H & Youth Assistant

KG – Karl Green, Asst. Prof., Dept. of Comm. Resource Dev., Community Resource Dev. Agent

MMS – Mary Meehan-Strub, Prof., Dept. of Family Living, Family Living Agent / Dept. Head

RM – Robert Matysik, Prof., Dept of Youth Dev., 4-H & Youth Agent

SH – Sheila Harding, Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program Coordinator

SDH – Steve Huntzicker, Asst. Prof., Dept. of Agriculture, Ag Agent

# MONTHLY REPORT TO THE COUNTY BOARD

## Public Works & Infrastructure June 2011

### Highway Department

- We have been working on a rehabilitation project on CTH V from CTH T to CTH TT. At this point the culverts are replaced, old asphalt is ground up and we are in the process of adding additional base gravel. The schedule is to start paving on June 6<sup>th</sup> weather permitting.
- The required bi-annual road condition ratings (PASER Ratings) are complete and have been sent into the WisDOT. This is a WisDOT requirement that is required to be submitted and input into the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR). These ratings are then used for various grant submittals as well as providing an overview of the road conditions within the State of Wisconsin.
- The County Crew is in the process of performing various maintenance projects on our County System, such as crack filling and shoulder maintenance.
- The State Crew has been crack filling on the State System on STH 16 and the Interstate. They have also been working on the STH 162 earth moving project and correcting issues that resulted from our very wet spring.
- The Ho-Chunk Nation contacted us for any small projects that we might have need for funding under the Indian Reservation Road (IRR) Program. CTH V from CTH Q north into the river bottoms in an IRR and as such has been submitted for funding consideration under that program. This project is estimated at \$250,000.00.
- Again this year the WisDOT has issued policy that there will only be one mowing along the State System, with the exception of areas identified as safety concerns. The Highway Department will be reaching out to the local municipalities and business groups to get the word of this policy out.

Respectfully Submitted  
*Ronald Chamberlain*

### Solid Waste

- Mediation with Landfill Contractor – Meetings and mediation with the St. Joseph Construction Company continue regarding operations of the landfill contract. Progress is being made in various areas, while some issues remain unresolved.
- Use of HHM – The number of county residents using the HHM facility remains approximately the same as it was at this time in 2010; however the total weight of

wastes received has increased by nearly 20%. In 2011 the average weight of the waste delivered by each resident has increased by over 10 pounds. Considering the mission of the HHM facility is to divert hazardous wastes from disposal in the landfill, increasing the total weight of wastes disposed at HHM is a positive trend.

- Green Tier Certification – On June 1<sup>st</sup> the Wisconsin DNR presented the La Crosse County Solid Waste Department with a certificate accepting it into the Wisconsin DNR's Green Tier Program. This program is designed to provide incentives for participants to move beyond just complying with regulations and to demonstrating "superior environmental performance". Through this unique program the WDNR offers recognition, reduced inspection frequency, regulatory flexibility, and a closer working relationship. The Solid Waste Department is the first municipal landfill to be accepted into this program. Acceptance into this program demonstrates the Solid Waste Department manages customers and citizens waste in a responsible and secure manner.
- Increased Traffic at Landfill – The removal of stockpiled sand by the St. Joseph Construction Company has significantly increased landfill traffic. St. Joseph's has installed a temporary, portable scale at their expense. This has reduced traffic at the County's scale.
- Entrance Area – Data gathering and evaluations on how to change the entrance area continue. Traffic counts, accident reports and criteria to evaluate alternatives are being developed. Appraisal of the Schroeder property has been initiated, but will not be complete until July. Stakeholder meetings are being preliminarily scheduled for June. A report summarizing the evaluation of alternatives and providing a recommendation is not expected to be ready until September.
- Pharmaceutical Collections - HHM is partnering with the Compass Prevention Network, the Sheriff's Department, the Onalaska and La Crosse Police Departments to collect unwanted pharmaceuticals. Recently two special collection events were held. These special collections are held with the presence of law enforcement and allowed for the collection of controlled substances in addition to uncontrolled prescriptions and over the counter medications.
- Shingle Recycling – Because of recent hail damage in the area, the volume of shingles delivered to the landfill has increased. For example, on one day in May, 39 loads of shingles crossed the scale. The volume of shingles has doubled from what it was at the same time last year and for the month of May alone, it has quadrupled.
- Solid Waste Evaluation – The Cities of La Crosse and Onalaska councils have approved the formation of an Ad Hoc committee. Members are currently being invited onto the committee from each City. This committee will review information contained in the Solid Waste Assessment Report jointly prepared by the Cities of La Crosse and Onalaska, La Crosse County, and Xcel Energy.
- Sustainability - The Sustainable La Crosse Commission has completed a study of La Crosse County's electrical use and meter locations. This will give the committee a baseline to study the amount of electricity being used by all of the County buildings. We can then track energy reductions based on efficiency improvements. The committee has been receiving reports from departments on their sustainability efforts based on the County's strategic plan for sustainability. A compilation of these reports will be presented to the County Board in the next several months. The Commission is also

reviewing the goals and discussing additional opportunities for the County to save energy, money and resources.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry A. Koch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'H' and 'K'.

Henry A. Koch, P.E.

# MONTHLY REPORT TO THE COUNTY BOARD

## Judiciary & Law June 2011

### Medical Examiner

In 2010 the Medical Examiner's office provided 365 day 24 hour coverage for the County of La Crosse with a staff consisting of the Medical Examiner (John Steers), an on call Chief Deputy Medical Examiner (Tim Candahl), and three part-time on call DSI's, (Peter Stinson, Jennifer Marks, and Christine Henson, RN).

During the months of January 2010 through December 2010, there were 313 cases investigated:

Natural Deaths: 233

Accident: 57

Suicide: 16

Homicide: 2

Undetermined: 6

Suicide deaths in 2010, there were a total of 16 deaths as the result of self harm:

10 deaths due to gunshot wounds  
4 deaths due to hanging  
1 death due to prescription drug overdose  
1 death due to exsanguination

There were a total of 28 autopsies requested; the national average for autopsies is 10% of case load.

There were a total of 559 cremation permits issued, with 313 death certificate fees collected for total revenue of \$70,595.

Respectfully submitted

John W. Steers, Medical Examiner

### Child Support

**Funding:** At this time, it is unknown if the State plans to correct the budgeting oversight that will leave state funding from General Purpose Revenue at ½ the \$8.5 million provided in 2010. The Joint Commission on Finance voted to maintain the GPR level at \$4.25 million which will take effect in July 2012. The directive for JCF is that the Department of Children and Families – Bureau of Child Support Enforcement is to devise new performance measures that will ensure efficiency in every agency across the state. Although admirable on the surface, the agencies went through an extensive process review in 2006 in response

to the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. It may be difficult to find other efficiencies that don't impact the level of services of provided to customers.

**Staffing:** The agency has one anticipated maternity leave this summer and is fortunate enough to be able to use unspent salary from 2010 to bring back a retired worker as a limited term employee on a part time basis to help cover the case load.

**Performance:** The agency continues to do well in establishing court orders and collecting on past due arrears. The paternity establishment ratio and collection on current support are areas of focus for the agency. Another Support Specialist is being trained on paternity establishment and hopefully this will address the reduction in this performance category compared to this same time last year. The economy has created challenges in collecting current support, but economic indicators point to signs of recovery. This should enable the agency to bring that performance number back in line with previous years.

*Meg Torgerud, Supervisor  
La Crosse County Child Support*

## **Clerk of Courts**

Records retention is a huge process for the courts with probate having the longest retention period by case type. As indicated in our prior monthly report, our Registrar in Probate retired after 41 years of service to La Crosse County. Currently, the office is still being covered by an interim Register in Probate, Claudia Singleton, along with our assistant, Jane Korn. With assistance from various court staff and facilities staff, we have commenced the re-organization of the Probate files. By Supreme Court Rules Chapter 72, wills need to be kept for 100 years. Other probate matters need to be retained for 75 years. LaCrosse County became a county in 1851 – this is how long some of the probate files have been in the Admin Center vault. By Supreme Court rule, these type of files need to be offered to the state historical society. The historical society has agreed to take our files dating between the dates of 1851 to 1910. Their procedure will be to scan all of the files and the information will be available to the public through the historical society. As to the files we need to retain, we will coordinate scanning with our Document Graphics Services. They are currently scanning all of our adoption files which need to be retained indefinitely. This is a huge project – you can imagine the number of files since 1851. As indicated in past reports, court staff is scanning our files both through our CCAP software and staff through Document Graphics Services is assisting through their alchemy software.

*Pam Radtke  
Clerk of Courts*

## **Sheriff's Department**

La Crosse County Awards Ceremony  
May 13, 2011

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy and Congress established the week in which May 15<sup>th</sup> falls as National Police Week. During the week we pay tribute to the Law Enforcement Officers that have lost their lives in the line of duty for the safety and protection of others. We also recognize the service and sacrifice of law enforcement officers and citizens in protecting our communities. On May 13, 2011, the La Crosse County Sheriff's Dept. recognized these individuals for their personal excellence to our county.

The first Award presented is a Citizen Appreciation Award. The Citizen Appreciation Award is presented to a citizen in recognition for outstanding service to the Sheriff's Department in law enforcement efforts.

In February of 1982, Jack Sobotta came to the La Crosse County Jail. Not as an inmate but as a volunteer in the jail ministry program. Nearly 30 years later, Jack is still coming to the jail as a volunteer offering a faith-based ministry to the men incarcerated serving as a compassionate ear for them. Jack says that he is excited about what God is doing in the hearts of so many inmates. He has seen many miracles with the inmates when they realize what they have done to their lives. He is encouraged when he sees them make a better life style for themselves and to once again become individuals with integrity and to be respected in their community. Over the years, Jack has maintained relationships with several inmates who have turned their lives around after being released from jail and prison.

In 2008, Jack was awarded the Building a Foundation for our Community Volunteer Leadership Award from the La Crosse Community Foundation. A long time member of Rivers Harvest Church, Jack is truly an inspiration to so many individuals and he needs to be recognized for this.

On behalf of the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department, we would like to present to Jack Sobotta the Citizen Appreciation Award for your many years of service and dedication to the La Crosse County Jail Ministry Program.

The second Citizen Appreciation Award presented is to a community organization in recognition for their outstanding service to the Sheriff's Department in their law enforcement efforts.

Receiving this award is the Bangor Middle School Leadership Club. The students are: Gunnar Horstman, Alexandra Kershner, Alyson Wilcox, Aspen Zimmer, Wyatt McDonald, Trygve Anderson, Jordan Tallman, and Kirsten Tenner. Their advisors are Aimee Zucco, Jaimie Hotchkiss, and Rick Muellenberg.

In 2010, Mr. Mullenberg approached our K-9 officer, Deputy Brandon Stoughtenger about the possibility of doing some fundraising through the Bangor Middle School's Leadership Club for the La Crosse County Sheriff's Dept. K-9 program.

Deputy Stoughtenger met with the advisors for the leadership club and the advisors agreed that the K-9 program was a worthy cause for the leadership club to be a part of. Over the next several months, several fundraising events and projects were organized including a 90 item silent auction. All of the fundraisers were coordinated by the Leadership Club. All of the events and work was done by these 8 students with assistance from their advisors. Last December, the Bangor Middle School Leadership Club presented a check to Deputy Stoughtenger and the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department in the amount of \$4000 with another \$1500 set aside for a future donation. This was the single most money ever raised by the leadership club at Bangor Middle School.

Because of the hard work and dedication of these young adults, the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department was able to purchase a new K-9, Sabayie prior to the retirement of our current K-9, Cliff. This will allow for a smooth transition when it comes to the retirement of Cliff.

On behalf of the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department, we would like to recognize these students and their advisors for their donation to the Sheriff's Department K-9 program. Your hard work is truly appreciated and shall not go unnoticed.

The next award presented is a Citizen Appreciation Award presented to a citizen or citizens who save a life, prevent great bodily harm to another or for exemplary performance in aiding law enforcement.

On Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, Evelina Puckett of Prairie du Chien, was travelling to La Crosse on STH 35 near Goose Island County Park when her vehicle crossed the center line and was struck by semi. The fuel tanks on the semi immediately ruptured and caught on fire.

Shortly thereafter, Timothy Anderson, John Tellier, Luke Fritsch and Andrew Berg rushed to the car being driven by Evelina. By this time the semi was engulfed in flames and the back part of Evelina's car had caught on fire with Evelina still inside. All four individuals assisted in pulling Evelina from the car and away from the many gallons of spilled diesel fuel to safety until Emergency Responders arrived.

These individuals risked their life to help a stranger in a time of need. The act of these individuals truly defines what heroes are as their quick actions prevented a bad situation from becoming tragic. Putting oneself in harm's way to save a life is not only appreciated by Evelina Puckett, but it is appreciated by our communities and by Law Enforcement which we would like to recognize. We sincerely thank you for what you did. The La Crosse County Sheriff's Department would like to recognize these individuals for their exemplary performance in aiding law enforcement and present to you the Citizen Appreciation Award.

The Career Achievement Award is presented to a Department member for their continuous long-term exemplary performance and outstanding service to the community and the department. The award is presented to those employees at or near the completion of their Law Enforcement career.

On December 31<sup>st</sup> 2010, Deputy Tom Sherwin retired from the Sheriff's Department after nearly 27 years of service.

Prior to starting with the Sheriff's Department, Tom worked for the Onalaska Police Department. On February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1984, Tom began his career with the Sheriff's Department. Tom worked many years in the Patrol Division as a night shift patrol deputy. For the past several years, Tom worked as the Departments Process Server, responsible for serving legal documents throughout the county.

On behalf of the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department, your co-workers, the awards committee, as well as the citizens of La Crosse County, we would like to show our appreciation to you for your many years of hard work and your dedication to the department.

The next award presented is a Certificate of Commendation. This award is presented to a department member for an outstanding act that brings credit to the department and is recognized by other employees as an act which shows exceptional professional skill where they have displayed unusual initiative and exceptional energy.

In 2010, Deputy Schieldt took it upon himself with a high degree of energy to raise funds to equip all of the Sheriff's Department patrol vehicles with AED's. At one time the department had sufficient AED's however due to age and recalls on the equipment, only three of the squads were so equipped. Emergency medical care is a passion of Deputy Schieldt's. Frequently, Deputies are the first on the scene of emergency situations and it is Deputy Schieldt's desire to provide all of the deputies with the best equipment available. Daren felt the need to raise money to purchase the equipment due to the fact that budgetary funds were not easily available.

In coordination with several other local foundations, Deputy Schieldt helped coordinate and organize several events in the Coulee Region to raise the required funds to equip all of the patrol squads with this life saving equipment. In March of 2011, the purchase was made of 7 new AED units to go with the 3 that the department had previously. In the last week of March, the 7 new units were put into service and since that time deputies have had two uses of the AED units. In both cases, an AED was used to restart the heart of an individual suffering from a cardiac condition.

On behalf of the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department, we would like to recognize Deputy Schieldt for going above and beyond to make this project happen. Deputy Schieldt's passion and initiative helped raise the funds necessary to purchase this much needed equipment.

The next award presented is a Certificate of Commendation presented to three department members for exceptional professional skill in the performance of their work involving a duty of great responsibility where they have displayed exceptional energy.

In August of 2009, Jailers Annie Corcoran, Tonya DeLap, and Eric Faas volunteered to assist in the building of our new jail addition by serving on the Jail Transition Team. When these three individuals volunteered for this team, neither the administration nor the transition team had any idea how much work would come upon them. Immersed in this project for over a year and a half, these individuals took ownership and provided leadership for co-workers and administration.

As a team they completed the How to Open a New Institution training through the National Institute of Corrections and quickly learned the magnitude of the project. The transition team found themselves buried in policies, procedures, blueprints, dust, keys, furniture, electronics, architect meetings, vendor meetings, and contractor meetings. Equipped with their own hard hats they became the well respected experts representing our Department. These individuals provided training to jail staff on various new concepts and technology including direct supervision, camera equipment, video visitation, and building security. They provided countless tours for various vendors, employees, board members, law enforcement officers, and criminal justice professionals. They have spent countless hours during all hours of the day and night assisting co-workers in resolving construction related issues and correcting the problems.

Annie, Tonya and Eric were a true team dedicated to the project, respected by their peers and supervisors, deserving of recognition for their exceptional professional skills, abilities, initiative and dedication to their jobs.

The next award presented is the Department's Life Saving Award. The life saving award is given to a Department Member for an act, on or off duty, through disregard of personal safety or prompt and alert action resulting in saving or significantly prolonging the life of another.

On the evening of January 31<sup>st</sup> and into the early morning hours of February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, Deputy Sloan and Officer Kingery of the Onalaska Police Department were following up on a routine call of a driving complaint on CTH S just outside the city limits of Onalaska. The officers observed what appeared to be a fresh set of footprints in the snow, unrelated to the call that they were on, leading through a field away from the intersection. Recognizing that something was suspicious, the officers began following the tracks for over a half a mile through the field and up a nearby bluff. The temperature that evening was in the teens with strong winds blowing.

The officers subsequently discovered a nearly unconscious adult clearly not dressed for the cold weather. The subject was despondent, intoxicated, and had consumed an unknown

amount of prescription medication in an attempt to take his own life. At one point the individual became combative with the officers at which point they used their training to restrain the individual until help could arrive. After the arrival of other officers and emergency personnel, the subject was carried out of the location and transported to the hospital.

Deputy Sloan and Officer Kingery used extraordinary efforts during extreme weather conditions to save the life of another. The personal initiative and instincts of both of them set them apart as exemplary officers performing their duties. Officer Justin Kingery will be recognized by his agency for his performance during this incident. On behalf of the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department we would like to present to Deputy Peter J. Sloan the first Life Saving Award given by this Department for his dedication, professionalism and proactive approach in locating this individual and subsequently saving his life.

The last award to be presented today is the Medal of Honor. The Medal of Honor is the highest award given to a department member. The award is presented for performing an outstanding act of bravery or heroism on or off duty. Demonstrated unselfishness, courage, and the immediate high risk of death or serious physical injury would characterize such an act.

On the evening of March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010, officers were dispatched to Hidden River Road, north of West Salem for a report of a stabbing. Much of the incident has been highly reported in the media due to the seriousness of the incident, the resulting charges filed and the subsequent court proceedings. What has not been reported are the actions of the officers on that evening including the heroism that saved the lives of others as well as themselves. The following is a summary of the incident as reported by several officers involved in the incident.

Several Deputies from the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department, Officers from the Onalaska Police Department, and Troopers from the Wisconsin State Patrol responded to Hidden River Road, rural West Salem, after receiving a call from a 22 year old female who stated that her mother had been stabbed by her father. Information regarding the incident came in as officers responded including the fact that it was believed the mother had escaped the residence and went to a neighbors; that the suspect was inside the house; then he was locked out of the house; then he was now trying to get back in; that the caller and her younger sister had barricaded themselves inside a basement bedroom; and that the house was now on fire.

Deputy Baudek and Sgt. Lubinski arrived on scene along with Officer Page and Officer Gerbig of the Onalaska Police Department. Smoke was emitting from the attached garage through the windows and the siding. Deputy Baudek approached the garage and could observe that there was a fire inside and that a vehicle was totally engulfed in flames. Deputy Baudek then began searching for an access point to the basement of the residence to rescue the girls that were barricaded inside.

Reaching the backyard, Deputy Baudek could not locate a gate that would open at which time he scaled the fence and entered the backyard. He attempted to look inside the basement but was unable to observe any individuals nor could he gain access. Scaling another fence, Deputy Baudek ran to a walk-out basement door and entered the basement, joining up with Officer Page who had just entered the same door. At this point the house was burning when they made an attempt to locate the girls and or the suspect.

With their side arms drawn, the officers located a door which appeared to be to a bedroom which was barricaded from the inside. The officers immediately identified themselves to the occupants inside at which time they could hear the panic and screaming coming from inside.

The girls out of fear refused to open the door. Deputy Baudek began kicking the door repeatedly and could feel the door inch open with every kick.

At this point the basement began to fill up with smoke. The officers continued to communicate with the girls that the house was on fire at which point Deputy Baudek continued to kick until the door flew open. Immediately, two panicked girls came running out of the room where they were directed to the basement door. The girls were directed out the door and met by Officer Gerbig and they were escorted to safety.

Deputy Baudek and Officer Page continued to search the basement for any more victims or the suspect. As smoke came down the basement stairs, the officers proceeded up them. Continuing to clear the residence, the officers discovered two large dogs lying on a couch in the upstairs. The house was now mostly filled with smoke and breathing was becoming difficult. The officers now feared that their exits from the residence were becoming blocked. The officers found a door out onto a deck however there were no stairs to exit. In checking another door, Officer Page discovered that it was the front door to the house. In opening it he shut it right away due to the intense heat and smoke. Deputy Baudek and Officer Page then each picked up one of the dogs at which point Deputy Baudek opened the front door and both officers ran out the door, through the smoke and heat, and jumped off a retaining wall as the dogs ran away. Deputy Baudek and Officer Page then proceeded towards the driveway where they soon discovered that their duties were not complete.

After getting to the area of the driveway, Deputy Baudek and Officer Page observed an individual, later to be identified as the suspect in the stabbing, approaching them from around the garage. Deputy Baudek immediately drew his Taser X-26. The suspect was approximately 15 feet away from the officers and they then observed the subject to have a large knife raised in his right hand. The suspect was approaching Officer Page and it did not appear that the suspect observed Deputy Baudek. Fixated and agitated at Officer Page, the suspect continued at which time Deputy Baudek fired his Taser and Deputy Page fired one round from his firearm at the individual. The subject was threatening Officer Page at the moment that both officers fired their weapons. The subject fell to the ground and he was taken into custody.

As the fire continued to intensify, the officers on scene removed the victim from harm's way and began to provide aid to him. The subject subsequently was transported to the hospital where he survived from his wounds. The subject was charged with, and plead guilty to five felonies including two counts of first degree recklessly endangering safety, two counts of second degree recklessly endangering safety and arson. The subject was sentenced to 20 years in prison with 16 years of extended supervision following his release.

On May 22<sup>nd</sup> of this year, Deputy Baudek and Officer Page will be awarded the Wisconsin Professional Police Association's Award for Valor for their courage in rescuing two girls from a burning building along with their dogs and then their encounter with an armed individual and apprehension of him. Officer Page will be recognized by his agency for his actions during this incident.

On behalf of the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department, we present to Deputy Daniel P. Baudek the Medal of Honor for his outstanding act of bravery and heroism while demonstrating courage while in the immediate high risk of death or serious physical injury.

*Jeffrey A. Wolf, Chief Deputy  
LaCrosse County Sheriff's Dept.*

## Emergency Services

Weather events typically provide some challenging activity for Emergency Services and this report is highlighted by multiple weather events over the past two months. The most recent was a severe thunderstorm on May 22<sup>nd</sup> that produced large hail, damaging winds and a tornado. The tornado, which was rated an EF2, began southwest of Hokah, MN, crossed the Mississippi River and ran through the south side of La Crosse. Fortunately, there were no serious injuries, but many homes and businesses were damaged, including some that were destroyed.

Below shows the path of the tornado that cut through La Crosse, based on reports of damaged homes and businesses. The more than 200 circles represent buildings that had damage classified as minor, major or condemned.



More specific information about this event, including radar images and pictures from the storm can be obtained from the La Crosse National Weather Service website at: <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ax/?n=may2211>

That Sunday was the 7<sup>th</sup> busiest day for emergency calls in the history of La Crosse County's Public Safety Communications center, reaching a total of 194 from midnight to midnight. A typical 24-hour period averages about 80 emergency calls, but more than 50 happened in the hour of the storm. At one point, there were more than 100 active public safety calls for service pending, most being power lines down or other such hazards. More than 80% of these calls came from wireless telephones.

As the Communications Center continued to be active with the aftermath of the storm, other Emergency Services staff reported to the on-site incident command to provide support and assist with obtaining resources to the City of La Crosse. The Command and Communications Vehicle was deployed to incident command and an Emergency Operating Center was opened in the Law Enforcement Center.

During the following week, Emergency Management and the Health Department assisted with accessing the damage to report to Wisconsin Emergency Management, beginning the process to apply for State Disaster Fund assistance.

This was the second actual activation of the outdoor severe weather alert sirens this season, with the first being April 10<sup>th</sup>. More information about that event will be mentioned in Emergency Management's Report.

## **Public-Safety Communications (Al Blencoe, Manager)**

### **March**

#### **Telephone Calls**

9-1-1 Calls      2,280 (average of 74 per day)  
    Answered within 10 seconds:    95.92%  
    Answered within 20 seconds:    99.34%  
    \* 5 calls more than 30 seconds

Total Calls      22,725 (average of 733 per day)

#### **Calls for Service**

Law Enforcement	8,031
Fire Fighting	187
Emergency Medical	554

### **April**

#### **Telephone Calls**

9-1-1 Calls      2,459 (average of 82 per day)  
    Answered within 10 seconds:    95.85%  
    Answered within 20 seconds:    99.51%  
    \* 1 call more than 30 seconds

Total Calls      23,338 (average of 778 per day)

#### **Calls for Service**

Law Enforcement	8,257
Fire Fighting	188
Emergency Medical	556

*\*National Emergency Number Association Standards:*

- 90% within 10 seconds (during the busy hour)
- 95% within 20 seconds.

## **Emergency Management (Keith Butler, Coordinator)**

Most of the Emergency Management office attention during this report period was focused on the Mississippi River flooding situation, which crested in May and has now receded to a level below the 10-foot river gauge threshold for the "Slow, No Wake" ordinance actions. Some of the flood preparation actions and events during this period were: Volunteer Coordination meeting with local officials and agencies at the United Way – Onalaska on March 28, live TV-19 broadcast on March 28, WI DOT evacuation planning meeting on March 30, preparing the former Court Officers office for use as a temporary Flood Emergency Operations Center, flood GIS mapping coordination with the Zoning and Land Conservation Departments, development of a new FACEBOOK site for public flood information and notification, obtaining dozens of digital photographs from several area locations at each significant flood elevation for future documentation and analysis, 06:30 am daily radio interview regarding the flooding that was aired on several area FM radio stations at various times each day (continued until the river level fell below the 12' mark), and periodic updates to the ALERT LA CROSSE website.

The WI Severe Weather Week was preceded by an actual event on Sunday, April 10 with significant large hail damage throughout the southern third of the county. SkyWarn (storm spotter volunteers) were activated and the Emergency Management Coordinator and one other SkyWarn spotter observed tornado-like rotation along the US Hwy 14/61 corridor.

Outdoor weather warning sirens were activated throughout the county, which resulted in the usual media interest in sirens and several interviews. One Mass Casualty Team trailer, which is stored outside, received hail damage from this storm. Damage assessment tours and interviews with regional radio and TV stations occurred over the next several days.

A late winter snow storm threatened the region on April 19. Emergency Management provided situational awareness to other area Emergency Managers and to the State.

County Emergency Management Coordinator participated in the State WISCOM radio system management board meeting in Madison on April 25.

County Emergency Services/Emergency Management and the Mass Casualty Team provided communications and logistics support during the La Crosse Fitness Festival on Sunday, May 1.

County Emergency Management hosted the National Weather Service regional Leadership and Diversity Conference in the Admin Bldg auditorium on May 4 -5 and the national Vigilant Guard Exercise program – WI Hospital Emergency Preparedness Program exercise SIMCEL on Wednesday, May 18. The SIMCEL successfully tested many of the County Emergency Operations Center communications systems.

**Jay Loeffler, Administrator  
Emergency Services**