



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

County Administrative Center
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Memo To: La Crosse County Board of Supervisors
From: Steve O'Malley, County Administrator
Date: April 10, 2012

Re: April Monthly Report to the County Board

Attached is the April 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”

April 17th New Board Member Orientation, Room B-190 County Administrative Building

Beginning @ 4:30 pm to take individual photographs of new Supervisors for the County website, the actual orientation will begin at 5:00 pm to provide basic orientation about meeting conduct, directory information, travel expenses, e-mail addresses and other general items of interest.

April 17th, 2012 Annual County Board Organizational Meeting

The County Board of Supervisors will begin the 2012 – 2014 term @ 6 pm where all 29 County Supervisors will take the oath of office and then elect officers. Along with a number of business items, there will be general overview provided by the Corporation Counsel and County Clerk. Everyone should be sure to complete their Committee Preference forms for the new term.

April 24th County Board Retreat 8:30 - Noon Lunda Center

We will have an interesting program of presentations and interactive activities planned to set the goals for the next two year term. Please mark you calendar and RSVP to the County Clerk's office.

*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*

MONTHLY REPORT TO THE COUNTY BOARD

Planning, Resources & Development Committee April 2012

Zoning, Planning and Land Information:

Ordinance Updates:

1. Zoning ordinance: The County Board has now adopted by first and second reading the Zoning Ordinance. We will now have approximately 12 months of working with the Towns to implement these changes and work with DATCP to attain certification. We have met with the Towns unit to discuss the process, and staff are assembling some assistance documents to help the Towns with their difficult decision making process.
2. Sign Ordinance was approved by County Board and published. Staff is working on forms for new sign permit applications and with the IT department to improve our long term tracking of these permits.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Here is where I would like to address the County Board. There was an exchange at the February County Board Meeting during the Sign Ordinance Debate, where Supervisor Dan Ferries asked me to answer a question regarding the ability to locate electronic digital billboards in La Crosse County. His opinion is that due to the set-back standards, there are no locations in the County where these signs are allowed to be permitted. My response was there are three areas where there are 20,000 vehicle trips per day where the signs can be permitted. In completing further research at Supervisor Ferries' request, on these three areas, there are also other set-back requirements which will not allow EDB's to be permitted in those three areas currently, without changes occurring. My response to the question did not provide a full understanding of the issue. They cannot currently be issued a permit, but would need a change, such as a zoning change, or an appeal by the applicant which may allow the EDB in this area, or a Town adopting an ordinance in any area of La Crosse County which may allow an EDB. I should have clarified my response to include this future potential. Please accept my apology for providing a less than complete response to the question. There was no malice or intent in my actions. Sincerely, Charlie Handy, County Planner.

Staff changes: Our Department Head, Jeff Bluske, has retired. Department Organization has been reviewed and the position has been advertised for refilling very soon. There are a number of applicants who may be interviewed soon.

Farmland Preservation Plan: The State has certified our Farmland Preservation Plan, which is great news for our rural landowners who will continue to be able to receive the conservation assistance and farmland preservation income tax credits that they have qualified for since 1980 in La Crosse County.

Charlie Handy
County Planner

Metropolitan Planning Organization

2012 is looking like an exciting and busy year for us. Jackie and I have completed an update of the *La Crosse Area Sewer Service Area Plan* and the City of La Crosse Public Works Department is now helping to update some of the system data. This is a data update of the plan with no changes to the policies; the updated plan will make it easier for municipalities to prepare amendment proposals. We hope to have this plan ready for the May La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) meeting. We are also working on an update to the LAPC *Public Participation Plan* as required by both the Wisconsin and Minnesota DOTs.

The environmental studies for the Dresbach Bridge are now completed and a construction consultant will be determined this summer with construction starting this fall. Work will begin on new bridge piers north of the existing bridge. We are discussing an update to the regional bike plan to include recommendations based on the MnDOT decision to include support for a future bike/ped trail.

With the hiring of a new planning chief at the WisDOT Southwest Region I have been able to get the ball rolling once again on the Coulee Connections Study. WisDOT has agreed to host a series of monthly agency meetings in La Crosse to gain agreement to proceed with an open ended study of issues and opportunities for travel in the north/south direction between I 90 and South Avenue. Discussions are now centered on negotiations between the DNR and the City of La Crosse on steps to be taken to protect marshlands around the La Crosse River. Hopefully some agreement will be reached soon and the public process can begin. My goal is to complete this study in time for the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan* update we will complete in 2015. I have been discussing an "Origin/Destination" study with WisDOT to inform this study. There is much discussion about roadway improvements to serve commuters to and from the downtown La Crosse area. The last origin/destination study was conducted in 2002.

MnDOT, WisDOT, LAPC and Amtrak have completed contract agreements for the 2nd train on the Empire Builder route study. We should be meeting in April to finalize the scope of work and get that study underway.

My meetings continue for the Minnesota Multi Modal Plan project management team and bicycle counting technical committee. MnDOT is starting a southeast Minnesota freight study and will partner with us to consider barge traffic on the Mississippi and the agricultural and mineral (frac sand) movement between Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Tom Faella

Executive Director, La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC)

Department of Land Conservation

This year's early arrival of spring-like weather has many people optimistic about the possibility of an outstanding growing season. Area farmers are anxious to start work in the fields and get crops planted but as the weather says "yes" the calendar still says "no". The possibility of a killing frost remains high until the end of April and any crop planted too early could be damaged or killed by a hard frost. Today's cost for seed, fertilizer and fuel are too high to risk an early planting that may be wiped out and need to be replanted.

The Department of Land Conservation has been working with two county dairy farmers who are planning to expand their milking herds this year. Department staff assist the farmers to obtain the proper permits and develop timelines to install necessary conservation practices to meet soil and water conservation requirements set by the State of Wisconsin. In addition to the herd expansions, the department is also assisting three dairy farmers who will be installing manure storage facilities on their operations. Department staff assist with the soils foundation investigation to insure that the right type of storage liner is used to prevent potential ground water contamination. Staff also assist the farm operator with the development of a nutrient management plan so that the operator can properly apply the stored animal manure to fields at rates that don't exceed nutrient uptake from the planted crops.

The Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program has kept Department staff busy with farm assessments to determine if the participants are meeting program requirements. There are 241 landowners in La Crosse County that are currently participating in the Farmland Preservation Program. By rule, they need to be in full compliance with the State's agricultural performance standards and prohibitions by December 30th, 2015 to remain eligible to receive the tax credit. The Department of Land Conservation is charged with the responsibility of assisting landowners in meeting the soil and water conservation requirements of the program and to monitor their compliance as well. Four Department staff devote a portion of their time to assist program participants meet the program requirements. Staff provide assistance developing landowner soil and water conservation plans, nutrient management planning, engineering services and annual compliance monitoring. It requires 1300 staff hours annually to complete the work which is 9% of the departments total annual staff hours.

Gregg Stangl
Director of Land Conservation

UW-Extension

- Continued strategic planning with Human Services Supervisors and Managers as they reviewed and provided input on "Human Services' Management Philosophy, Leadership Team Commitments and Supervisory Expectations." The content from these sessions will provide the basis for a discussion on the Department's Mission, Vision, and Values, and follow-up Leadership Development Institutes, the next phase in trainings for Human Services Supervisors - Managers. (MMS)
- Co-authored the report "The Health Care Industry and La Crosse County: Will Medicaid and BadgerCare Budget Reductions Impact the Local Economy?" at the request of the La Crosse Area Family Policy Board. The report explores the economic importance of and dependence on the health care industry, in terms of employment and income in La Crosse County, and the impact reductions in Medicaid and BadgerCare funding would have on employment, labor and total income, and industry sales. Report is available from UW-Extension. (MMS)
- Thirty-three youth and eight parents participated in a Meat Animal Quality Assurance Training (MAQA) this past month. The program teaches youth ages 8-19 about addressing the health and welfare of animals and the proper use of animal health products to prevent drug residues. Each youth learned proper handling techniques, space requirements for various animals and the importance of having a written euthanasia plan during hands-on activities. (SDH)

- Twenty-Two people participated in the Master Composter Training in 2011. One year later, eight participants have reported more than 680 contacts with local community members educating them about how composting will enable residents to recycle leaves, grass clippings, garden debris, and food waste into a valuable compost product. (SDH)
- Over 160 participants, youth and adults, participated in the annual 4-H Clover College, a day of experiential learning. Participants learned through hands on activities in their choice of classes taught by over 45 adult and teen 4-H volunteers as well as area community business professionals and university students. There were more than 25 sessions taught, all related to various 4-H project areas. (JH)
- Recent 4-H Arts Festivals involved over 200 La Crosse County youth in musical, drama, public speaking presentations or individual arts and crafts exhibits. Youth that participated further developed their skills in the performing, communication and visual arts. Each group and participant received feedback to help improve performances and exhibits. (RM)
- The WNEP educator conducted eight presentations at senior dining sites that highlighted healthy eating out and salt awareness. After the presentation, 95% checked two or more changes that they are willing to make to reduce the amount of fat in their meals when eating out, and 45% will start or read more often the nutritional fact label to compare the sodium eating in order to lower their intake as needed. (SH)
- WNEP staff conducted a series of three activity-based classes for second graders about healthy eating from Pyramid/MyPlate by including whole grains, fruit/vegetables, lean protein and calcium rich foods. At the end of the series, 72% said their child seems more willing to taste new foods or foods that he or she usually doesn't eat, and 93% said their child has been eating more fruit. (SH)
- Presented Frac Sand presentations to the Monroe County Economic Development Forum, and the LADCO Board of Directors, and as a guest speaker at the Viterbo Leadership and Ethics program. In total, over 600 people have attended past presentations on the issue of frac sand. (KG)
- Continued presenting the Challenging Trends Facing Housing in La Crosse report to various organizations such as the Assisted in the drafting of the La Crosse Housing Taskforce Final Report. This report reviewed various neighborhood housing programs throughout the country, and illustrated programs the City of La Crosse could implement that would potentially help improve the local conditions of housing in the City. The top three programs included better enforcement of existing codes and laws, and a grant program aimed to improve reinvestment in housing stock. (KG)

JH – Jenny Holm, 4-H & Youth Assistant

KG – Karl Green, Assoc. 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, Assoc. Prof., Dept. of Agriculture, Ag Agent

MONTHLY REPORT TO THE COUNTY BOARD

Public Works & Infrastructure April 2012

Highway Department

- Winter continued very mild, which resulted in a reduction in overtime paid out for winter maintenance as well as a reduction in materials used. Please keep in mind the winter budget for 2012 includes November and December, so how we finish up the winter budget will depend a great deal on how those two months treat La Crosse County.
- Crews are crack sealing and patching on various county trunk highways. They are also sealing cracks and patching for WisDOT on the state highways in the county.
- Crews have been performing preparation work along CTH DE (CTH E to Balmer Road) getting ready for our upcoming reconditioning project. Over the winter the brushing was done and currently they are in the process of culvert replacement.
- The sign shop has been conducting the annual review of our sign inventory with the aid of a new retroreflectometer. This is an instrument which measures the amount of light reflected back from a traffic sign. This operation provides an in depth and extremely accurate review of our assets thus ensuring that we are provided the safest possible facility to the motoring public.
- The Department is currently in the process of reviewing the impacts on County Roads by a proposed frac sand mining operation in the Village of West Salem. The mine, located on Buol Road in the vicinity of the West Salem interstate exit, will have to utilize either CTH C toward I-90 or CTH C and CTH M to access State Trunk Highways. We are in the process of reviewing the road structure as well as intersection functionality that will be impacted by this proposed mine.
- Legislatively this last session saw some definite benefit to La Crosse County:
 - AB 180 Pothole Liability which reduces our liability exposure for roadway defects is on the Governor's desk.
 - AB 518 Scenic Byways, introduced by Representative Billings and Senator Schilling, has been passed and signed. Efforts will begin shortly to utilize this change in law to benefit La Crosse County.
- The Highway Department has again been successful in securing a contract with the WisDOT for the performance of various maintenance tasks on STH 16 from La Crosse to West Salem, including improvements to the Moos Road intersection, \$250,000.
- Below is a reminder of the large projects we have coming up this year in addition to seal coating, crack filling and other maintenance activities:

- STH 162 from Bangor to Middle Ridge – this is our big WisDOT project this year, we are working to widen shoulders, clear brush and perform various shaping needs along the ditches, side slopes and back slopes.
- CTH DE – from CTH E to Balmer Road – this a reconditioning in which we will be pulverizing the existing road, adding more base aggregate to increase the strength of the road, and finally placing a new asphalt surface.
- Various maintenance overlay projects - CTH B (CTH O to CTH M), CTH B (City Loop to STH 162), CTH E (STH 162N to McCrae Rd), CTH II (Hill Area), CTH JB, CTH NN, CTH Q (STH 108 to CTH M) and CTH S (CTH SN to Top of Hill). Keep in mind that these will be ultra-thin overlays (3/4”), and they are a maintenance tool which aids in extending the life of our roads thus maximizing our investment.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns that you feel I can be of assistance with, and thank you for your continued support and efforts.

Respectfully Submitted

Ron Chamberlain

Solid Waste

HMM - Utilization of HMM has increased significantly. Year-to-date the number of household users is up by over 35% and the total weight of waste collected has increased by over 60%. Accepting e-waste for free and the favorable weather are two possible factors in these increases.

Ben Dahlby and Eric Bashaw passed their Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (CHMM) test and have become the first persons from the Solid Waste Department to achieve CHMM certification. CHMM is a voluntary certification offered by the Institute of Hazardous Materials Management and accredited by the American National Standards Institute. Receiving this certification requires demonstrated expertise in all areas of environmental management and compliance including environmental health and safety requirements.

Achieving this certification required a major commitment of time and energy on their part. The HMM program, the Solid Waste Department and the citizens of La Crosse County will benefit from their efforts and the knowledge which they have gained.

Solid Waste Evaluation – The Solid Waste Evaluation Committee is considering four alternatives for improvement of garbage collection and recycling services in the city of La Crosse and Onalaska. The next committee meeting will be on April 10 at the Solid Waste Department. On April 18 at the annual meeting of the Solid Waste Department, a panel discussion led by Dan Ferries, Jarrod Holter and Dale Hexom will be given to update interested parties on progress to date.

23rd Annual Stakeholder’s Meeting – On April 18 at the Fox Hollow Golf Course Banquet Hall, the Solid Waste Department will hold the 23rd Annual Stakeholder’s Meeting. Separate invitations to County Board supervisors, municipal officials and other stakeholders have been distributed. A review of 2011, the status of Xcel and a panel discussion on improvements to recycling and garbage collection in the cities of Onalaska and La Crosse will be conducted. The meeting will occur from 8:30 a.m. until 12:00 noon.

Gas-To-Energy – Since March 2, the gas to energy project in partnership with Gundersen Lutheran has been on-line producing electricity and combined heat and power. This system is operated on a 24/7 basis and during the first month of operation it is projected to be 98% on line. The first annual pipeline inspection will be conducted by the Public Service Commission in May of 2012.

Landfill Contractor – The initial stage of rebidding the landfill operations contract is underway. Eleven responses to the initial request for interested parties have been received. Purchasing Department and the Solid Waste Department are developing a request for qualifications, which will be sent to the interested parties on approximately May 1.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry A. Koch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Henry A. Koch, P.E.

MONTHLY REPORT TO THE COUNTY BOARD

Judiciary & Law April 2012

Emergency Services

Emergency Management Coordinator Keith Butler was recently recognized for completing the Certified Emergency Management Professional program. Wisconsin Emergency Management established the voluntary Certification Program in October of 1994. The program is designed for the dedicated emergency practitioner who seeks professional status and certification in the field of emergency management. Successful candidates have completed 52 hours of independent study course work, 240 hours of classroom activities, and 80 hours of study at the Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Weather is the most influential element affecting how many 9-1-1 calls are made. Severe weather has accounted for the most challenging days experienced in the history of La Crosse County Public Safety Communications. However, weather anomalies can have a calming effect as well.

This winter has been one of the warmest on record, with a lack of pro-longed cold waves and few significant snowfalls. Typically the dispatch center averages 80-100 9-1-1 calls per 24-hour-period, but this winter saw that average drop to just 70. Public safety calls for service were much lower compared to other winter months as well.

As we enter spring, the unseasonably warm weather reverses that trend and we have already experienced weekends that have reached summer-time levels.

Public-Safety Communications

January

Telephone Calls

9-1-1 Calls 2,134 (average of 69 per day)
 Answered within 10 seconds: 97.24%
 Answered within 20 seconds: 99.77%
 * 0 calls more than 30 seconds

Total Calls 21,497 (average of 693 per day)

Calls for Service

Law Enforcement	7,396
Fire Fighting	196
Emergency Medical	525

February

Telephone Calls

9-1-1 Calls 1,921 (average of 69 per day)
 Answered within 10 seconds: 96.31%
 Answered within 20 seconds: 99.74%

* 2 calls more than 30 seconds

Total Calls 20,124 (average of 694 per day)

Calls for Service

Law Enforcement	7,458
Fire Fighting	172
Emergency Medical	492

**National Emergency Number Association Standards:*

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

La Crosse area’s MABAS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System) Division 134 became active in June of 2011. After no MABAS call-outs in the first six months, there have been three in the first quarter of 2012.

On Saturday, January 21, the Onalaska Fire Department responded to a garage fire. The fire was complicated by the storage of equipment on the property and also threatened the resident’s home. The fire was so intense and visible that it generated 20 9-1-1 calls in just a few minutes.

OFD arrived and “sized-up” the event, the first level of MABAS was requested. Within 38 minutes of the first page, there were 32 fire-fighters at the scene. This MABAS call-out brought in extra equipment from outside fire departments along with personnel to back-fill OFD’s station in the event of additional fire or EMS calls.

Agencies assisting in this event were: Campbell, Shelby and Stoddard Fire Departments, Onalaska Police, the Sheriff’s Department, Brice Prairie First Responders, Tri-State Ambulance, Emergency Management, the Red Cross, Xcel Energy, the Department of Natural Resources, Onalaska Inspection and Onalaska Street Departments.

The other two MABAS call-outs were a structure fire in the Town of Medary on February 5th and a large grass fire in the Town of Berglund (Vernon County) on March 17th.

Emergency Management (Keith Butler, Coordinator)

- Emergency Management and the Office of Justice Assistance completed an audit of the Radio Grant Round 6 on January 30. All of the grant equipment and documentation was reviewed and approved.
- Emergency Management participated in the Hospital Emergency Planning meeting held at Gundersen Clinic on February 2 and provided a report on related activities and projects.
- The Emergency Management Coordinator participated in a full-day tabletop hazardous materials exercise hosted by Midwest Industrial Fuels on February 9. A review of proper spill response procedures was conducted following a morning refresher training session.
- The County Fire Officers Association met at the Holmen FD station on February 13 and the EM Coordinator provided a report and information regarding a new state on-line hazardous materials reporting system (WHOPRS), a new state on-line training portal system and a review of the January 25 Kwik Trip HazMat exercise.
- Much effort was dedicated to the planning for a major three-state communication exercise which was to be held on March 1 but was postponed to April 26 due to a snow storm. The County EM Coordinator serves as the Exercise Director.

- The Mass Casualty Team met at the Shelby Fire Station on February 28 and received a presentation from a disaster supply management company located in Holmen (VeriCor).
- EM Coordinator was able to participate in a multi-county Hazard Vulnerability Assessment for Hospitals on March 1 due to the postponement of the Tri-State Communications Exercise.
- County EM has been selected to serve a two-year term on the Great Rivers 2-1-1 Governing Board which met on March 6.
- County EM and ES Administrator received acceptance for a radio upgrade grant from the Judiciary & Law Committee on March 6.
- County EM attended a WI DOT traffic incident management meeting at the La Crosse State Office Building on March 8 and received information regarding the planned construction of the new I-90 bridge over the Mississippi River, which will require extensive coordination with MN officials.
- The Coulee Region Police Chiefs met in the LEC on March 9 and received a presentation from EM regarding the use of plain language for radio communication instead of using codes or code phrases.
- County EM facilitated a tabletop exercise at the Farmington Town Hall on March 12 regarding responses and management of a large scale EMS incident in a rural setting.
- The 45th annual Governor's Conference on Emergency Management was held in Appleton on March 15 and 16.
- The Local Emergency Planning Committee met on March 21 and were introduced to a new Homeland Security program dealing with the security of hazardous materials, reviewed a video presentation regarding the role of LEPCs during chemical emergencies, and a status report from the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission on the five-year update of the County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Much research is being conducted regarding eligible projects that can receive 80% Federal funding.
- The La Crosse Area Radio Group met on March 22 and received a project proposal presentation from Elert and Associates, who are currently conducting a radio system project for the City of La Crosse.
- EM hosted a planning meeting for the La Crosse Fitness Festival emergency medical team on March 23.

**Jay Loeffler, Administrator
Emergency Services**

Register of Deeds

2012 statistics

	Birth Certificates	Death & Marriage Certificates	Real Estate Documents	Total Revenue
Jan.	477	1110	2075	\$ 57,725.30
Feb.	515	1188	1815	\$ 43,208.18

*Cheryl A. McBride
LaCrosse County Register of Deeds*