



*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: December 1, 2016**

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

Attached is the December 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 should 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”**

**County Board Planning Meeting for December 5, 2016 - CANCELLED**

With the conclusion of the 2017 Budget deliberations and issues, we didn't have enough agenda items for a planning meeting this month.

**Regular County Board Meeting December 14, 2016**

County staff are preparing the annual summary report as presented at year end for the Board:

- 2016 Annual Highlights and County Tax Impact on Individual Properties

*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 December 2016

### Zoning, Planning & Land Information

**Meet our staff:** Our Department will introduce you to members of our staff in the following bi-monthly reports. In this report you will meet: **Josh Johnson: Land Use Specialist**



Josh recently started as our second La Crosse County Land Use Specialist in November of 2016. He was born and raised just outside of Sparta, graduated high school in 2007, and went off to college at UW Stevens Point. Josh spent four and a half years studying Resource Management, and eventually earning a bachelor's degree in Land Use Planning. After college, he worked many different types of jobs from driving heavy equipment and spraying invasive plants, to installing and sanding hardwood floors. Josh recently married his best friend, Brittany, in September of 2016 and also bought a house right outside of Sparta earlier this year. They are enjoying all that marriage has brought so far including spending time with a new puppy, Todd. Josh also loves spending time outdoors on the golf course in the warm months, as well as hunting, bowling, and volleyball.

### **Update from Zoning: Zoning Permits Issued Jan 1st through Oct 31st 2016**

2015-Jan-October Permits Issued- 317	Value 2015- \$ 32,191,308
2016-Jan-October Permits Issued- 317	Value 2016- \$ 31,803,594 <b>Down 1.20%</b>

### **Zoning Permits Issued Aug1<sup>st</sup> through Aug31<sup>st</sup> 2016**

2015-Oct. 1 <sup>st</sup> – Oct. 31 <sup>st</sup> - 39 permits	Value 2015- \$ 4,320,375
2016-Oct. 1 <sup>st</sup> – Oct. 31 <sup>st</sup> - 34 permits	<b>Down 12.82%</b> Value 2016- \$ 4,155,560 <b>Down 3.81%</b>

*Charlie Handy, County Planner  
Zoning, Planning & Land Information*

## La Crosse County UW-Extension

- La Crosse County hosted an Area meeting for County elected officials, Administrators, and UW-Extension Department Heads from the recently defined UW-Extension restructure. The PRD Chair and 2 La Crosse County Board Supervisors met with 5 other County officials, 2 Administrators, and 8 County faculty, and 2 Extension Administrators to discuss the area needs, commitment to Extension and options for joint oversight and decision-making. (MMS)
- The La Crosse Association of Home and Community Education (LAHCE) hosted the fall West District HCE meeting. Over seventy HCE members from nine counties conducted district business and learned about human trafficking. (MMS)
- Paper screening and preliminary interviews were held for the 4-H Youth Development Educator position. Recruitment for the position was extended with the plan to have a second round of preliminary interviews in December. (MMS)
- Presented the "24 Carrot Manager" training for 37 Human Services Supervisors and Managers as a part of their Quarterly Leadership Development Institute. This training focused on the importance of doing timely and appropriate rewards and recognitions for employees, and defining options that Supervisors and Managers can use. The Leadership Developments Institutes are a direct result of the original "Results that Last" trainings provided for Human Services in 2013-14. (MMS)
- Thirty-two 4-H youth, ranging from kindergarten to 12th grade, recently submitted 34 different project categories, with photography as the most popular, in annual record books. Adult leaders evaluate the books looking over the writing for the growth that each youth made this past year; adults evaluated 86 unique project records. Record books encourage youth to reflect on their past project year, set and achieve goals, and determine how they can learn from their experiences. (JH)
- 4-H youth were recognized at the annual Achievement Celebration for their exceptional growth in outstanding project work, involvement in activities, and leadership displayed during the year. Emma Botcher, Onalaska and Bryn Langrehr, Bangor; received Legislative Citation Awards from State Representative Steve Doyle and State Senator Jennifer Schilling in honor of their commitment to citizenship, community and leadership. (JH)
- UW-Extension's county based nutrition education is now called FoodWise, formerly known as the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program, or WNEP. A successful nutrition education program is getting a new name to make it relevant and accessible to more audiences. FoodWise continues to provide nutrition education to Wisconsin families and individuals with limited incomes in La Crosse County. (KJ)
- Over 40 fifth grade students at Summit Elementary participated in a series of nutrition classes led by a FoodWise educator. After learning about whole grains and practicing reading the food label to identify whole grain foods, 39 students completed a survey that showed that 100% would do one or two new actions during the upcoming week to identify and choose more whole grain foods. In addition, 83% agree that they are helping their body by eating whole grains. (KJ)
- Prepared and presented the results of the Synergy White Paper to the La Crosse County Economic Development Committee, and the Synergy Executive Committee. The paper reviews the Synergy process of improving overall economic conditions in the region, and reviews a list of ideas the three Synergy committee's developed during their half year of discussions. (KG)
- Facilitated the Rebuilding for Learning refresher training to assist Rebuilding for Learning staff and committee members. The purpose of this event was to help bring all new and experienced committee members up to speed with the Rebuilding for Learning efforts and outcomes. Evaluations from the August 30th event were also

reviewed and analyzed for performance indicators and future potential subjects of review. (KG)

JH – Jenny Holm, 4-H Youth Development Program Advisor

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

KJ – Karie Johnson, Nutrition Coordinator

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

## **Department of Land Conservation**

The installation of soil and water conservation practices has come to an end for 2016. Despite the abundance of rain this construction season, much was accomplished by our farmers and contractors. Some of our staff workload was devoted to two dairy farms that were in the process of expanding their operations. When an existing farm expands its operation, it must do so in accordance with state rules regarding soil and water conservation compliance requirements. The process of expanding a farm can be daunting at times with the understanding that farming at a much larger level brings about difficulties often not experienced by the farmer before. One of the major concerns that an expanding dairy operation has to deal with is the increased amounts of animal waste that is generated with a larger herd and what to do with all that manure. The Department of Land Conservation staff assists farmers in planning manure management systems that help farmers cope with the additional manure in an environmentally safe way. Often this includes a manure storage facility to store waste until it can be safely applied to farm fields where the nutrients it contains can be utilized to fertilize next year's crops. Department staff also assist farmers develop annual nutrient management plans. The nutrient management plans assist farmers as to where and how much manure to apply to crop fields so that the nutrients in the manure are fully utilized by the crop and little is left behind to be transported off the fields during rain events or by snowmelt runoff. This not only protects our local streams from runoff pollution but also provides an economic benefit to the farmer by providing nutrients through manure applications rather than purchasing commercial fertilizers.

Department staff play a big role in helping framers develop their nutrient management plans. Every year in the months of January and February, Department staff conduct farmer nutrient management workshops. These workshops provide farmers with the latest news in crop management and fertilizer recommendations as well as one-on-one assistance in writing their plans. To date, there are 159 farmers in La Crosse County that are implementing nutrient management plans on 384 farms. This amounts to a total of 48,790 acres of cropland that are being managed under a nutrient plan. This represents 65% of all the cropland acres in La Crosse County. Conservation Specialists Matt Hanewall and Bob Nelson from the Department of Land Conservation are the major contributors to this successful program along with assistance from staff from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

*Gregg Stangl*  
*Director of Land Conservation*

## **County Surveyor**

**OFFICE MOVE:** We have made some good strides in preparing for our office move to the New Administrative Center. Our office has items in three rooms in our current building. One of the rooms is our "Highway Map Room" which houses Highway right-of-way maps. We

have analyzed the contents of each room and purged a great deal of unnecessary materials and boxed up many of the items we still need. Our official move date is scheduled for December 19<sup>th</sup>.

**FIELD WORK:** We were able to take advantage of some superb weather this year to accomplish our department goal for Public Land Survey System (PLSS) corner maintenance work. Our department goal is to perform maintenance on 5% of our 1405 Section and Quarter corner locations (5% is 71 corner locations) per year. I am pleased to report that we have performed maintenance on 82 corner locations placing us at 5.8% for 2016. When needed we also collect GPS coordinates on many of those corners. Those coordinates are then provided to our Land Information Department and applied to our GIS mapping for better mapping accuracies.

**HIGHWAY MAP SCANNING:** Jeanne Smaby in IT Production has been working to scan our highway right-of-way maps. So far she has completed the Towns of Bangor, Barre, Burns, Farmington and Holland. The project has been halted as department moves begin to take place. We will coordinate completing the project with IT in 2017. That coordination will need to take place since IT Production will be in a different building (HHS) than we will (NAC). I truly appreciate the care with which Jeanne exercises in handling these valuable documents and her efforts to extract the best quality images needed for this project. These maps will be made available to the public on the County Surveyor website.

**CERTIFIED SURVEY MAP REVIEW:** We have reviewed 64 Certified Survey Maps so far in 2016. (we had a total of 66 maps in 2015). This volume has been a good pace over the past two years and I believe is a good indication of a healthier economy. Assistant County Surveyor John Krage oversees this aspect of our work and continues to provide excellent service.

**ONGOING RESPONSE:** The County Surveyor's Office continually responds to our customers by assisting 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 land ownership and title questions. These questions come from realtors, attorneys, title people, land surveyors and the general public. For most people, a land transaction is a rare occurrence. Our office can often serve as a resource to help our customers understand how the land transaction process works and we are pleased to be able to assist them in this way.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Bryan Meyer, La Crosse County Surveyor*

## **Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Following up on the LAPC's October report on performance measures, it's interesting to note that the Wisconsin DOT has released 2015 "Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT)" data showing an all-time record, consistent with traffic increases seen nationally. VMT is a nationally-agreed upon measure of highway use that is calculated by combining data on statewide fuel consumption, the DOT's highway performance monitoring system and continuous traffic count information.

Here's a link to the [La Crosse Tribune article](#) from October 26 reporting that the increase is due to factors including a strengthening economy, growing population, lower gas prices and

continued growth in commercial motor vehicle traffic. According to WisDOT, La Crosse County's VMT peaked in 2008, fell in 2009 – 2013 and has risen in 2014 and 2015.

This comes at a time when the LAPC has embarked on a new program of "Traffic Demand Management," or TDM, which is identifying and implementing strategies and policies designed to reduce VMT, to help alleviate congestion and to increase safety.

At its October, 2016, the LAPC reviewed a number of traffic demand management strategies and prioritized working on the areas of proactive public policy, transit operations, parking management and land use planning. The LAPC plans to meet monthly in 2017 to determine how the area municipalities can work together to implement positive traffic reduction measures.

***Tom Faella***

Executive Director, La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC)

# MONTHLY REPORT TO THE COUNTY BOARD

## Public Works & Infrastructure December 2016

### **Solid Waste Department**

#### **Landfill**

Waste volumes at the landfill continue to remain at elevated levels.

In preparation for building a new cell in 2017, the bedrock excavation has been successfully completed.

Design work continues associated with the new site entrance. Revised cost estimates for the site entrance are being prepared and should be available in late December. Bids for construction of the site entrance are expected to be let in February 2017, with work beginning in late April or early May. The new site entrance is planned to be operational at the beginning of October, 2017.

#### **Landfill Operations**

With the accelerated waste filling of the landfill, the phasing plan must be modified to address winter operations. Filling will occur in areas that are more susceptible to wind, and additional fencing to control windblown paper may be required. The unusually wet weather associated with 2016 has increased gas production which is causing some odor problems. Adjustments to the gas system and covering operations are being addressed to minimize odor impacts.

Preparation for winter operations are somewhat behind schedule.

To meet the annual DNR requirement for projecting remaining site life and to determine density for waste placement, a new topographic map was developed. The Solid Waste Department is utilizing a survey that was done by drone mapping. Drone mapping of the landfill is expected to be more accurate, takes less time to do, and cost less.

#### **Xcel**

Waste volumes are also being received at elevated levels at Xcel. No problem with achieving the minimum required tonnage will occur in 2016. The previously reported higher BTU values from the waste were in error and BTU values are continuing to drop as the waste changes and recycling of more materials occurs. This is a nationwide phenomenon.

Negotiations with Xcel have been completed and a summary of those negotiations were presented to the Public Works & Infrastructure Committee in a closed session. A meeting of the Solid Waste Policy Board resulted in a motion of the stakeholders supporting an amendment to extend the stakeholders agreement in association with the extension of the Xcel contract. Work is progressing on contract language and in the near future, a resolution and recommendation to extend the Xcel contract will be brought to the County Board for approval.

**Gas to Energy**

With increased gas production at the landfill due to the 2016 wet weather, higher revenues should be experienced. However, due to the lightning damage in August and September, and some operational problems with the Gundersen engine, performance was somewhat disappointing. Actions are being taken to have a special consultant install additional lightning protection devices and to address engine problems at Gundersen to provide a more reliable performance.

**Tours/Events/Other**

Over two hundred and fifty individuals have taken tours of the landfill complex over the last several weeks including UWL environmental studies students. Western Technical College, Summit School, Viterbo, WisCorps, Habitat for Humanity ReStore, and the Outdoor Recreation Alliance. Several presentations were also given to the Dahl School of business, the Girl Scout Summit, St. Pat’s students, WIZM AM, WXOW, and WKBT. Nick had a chance to tour Good Greens a local aquaponics program run by ORC and a Duluth mattress recycling program with 7 rivers recycling. There has also been some movement on the Ag plastic recycling front, Revolution plastics has been putting containers at farms for the last several months and collecting material directly from farmers. This is sent to a recycling facility in Arkansas and made into plastic garbage bags. There hope is to come into La Crosse County sometime in 2017. Earth Fair event and cleanup of the marsh and trails planning has begun.

**Eagle Scouts**

The Scouts have been busy planning for Eagle projects coming up in 2017. A prairie grass garden project will be going in along the Western trails in the spring. Another scout is anxious to build several benches and a handicapped accessible picnic table. Another is looking into the feasibility of a human sundial. We have had one project started this October. A gazebo salvaged from Lakeview Health Care has been moved and installed along the western trail and will be repainted next spring.

**Household Hazardous Materials (HHM)**

**General Program**

Utilization of the HHM program has picked up the last two month, however for the year program utilization by household users continues to be below the record numbers of the last two years.

<b><u>2016 La Crosse HHM Household Users Year to Date</u></b>	
Percent Change in users vs. 2015	<b>-8%</b>
Percent Change in waste received (lbs.) vs. 2015	<b>-3%</b>

The waste volumes and revenue from VSQGs (small businesses) remains steady.

**Future Funding of HHM**

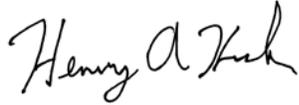
The County Board’s approved a budget that included an increase in the county’s contribution to the HHM program to \$1.25/capita, provided all the municipalities agreed to the same increase. Staff, with the assistance of several County Board members, has contacted all 18 municipalities and requested they budget the same increase in support for the program. As of 11/29/16 all but two have agreed.

## Sustainability

### Sustainable La Crosse Commission

The SLC has decided to focus its efforts on three items for next year. Two working groups will do research on waste and recycling efforts along with alternative transportation issues. Setting new goals for a modified indicators report will be discussed at the next meeting on Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully Submitted,



Henry A. Koch, P.E.

## Highway Department

- With the heavy rains this fall we have been working constantly on repairing the issues that are related to mudslides and washouts on both the State Trunk Highway and County Trunk Highway systems in La Crosse County. This has been an ongoing effort and will continue into next year. Joe Langeberg, County Highway Engineer, has been working closely with representatives from the FHWA, WisDOT and FEMA to maximize the revenue paid to La Crosse County to address of the flood related needs.
- There are some of the more water damaged severe areas that will actually require prevention work this next spring, for example a retaining wall constructed on CTH OA between CTH FO and STH 33 in order to protect CTH OA. We hope to be able to use mitigation funding for this project as well as others in order to better stabilize of facilities, and so both Joe and I will be working on obtaining that funding.
- In addition to flood related work, the State Crew has been performing maintenance projects on the State Highway System in La Crosse County including two larger projects, shouldering on STH 108 and culvert replacement on STH 162.
- In addition to water related damage, on the County System our final mowing for the season is wrapped up and we have turned to other needs including picking up dead deer, patching, sign maintenance and repair, culvert replacement/maintenance and other general maintenance issues.
- In addition to the above mentioned activities, efforts continue on the following projects in design. CTH SN (CTH S to Alpine Lane), CTH M (CTH O to CTH B), County-wide Safety analysis, CTH T High Risk Rural Roads, CTH HD (STH 53 to CTH MH) and CTH PI (STH 162 to Vernon County Line). We also have the following bridges on the following roads under design CTH J, CTH V, CTH B, CTH X, CTH M, and Drogseth Road.
- In particular we have had several meetings with the Village of Holmen and Knight Engineers as we wrap up the design on next year's projects on CTH HD and DH.

Please recall that these are cooperative efforts involving the jurisdictional transfer of portions of these roads to the Village of Holmen.

- We are also wrapping up the design on CTH T (High Risk Rural Roads) and CTH SN (CTH S to Alpine Lane) projects, both of which will be entering the real-estate acquisition phase in preparation for construction in 2017 and 2018 respectively.
- Once acquisition on the CTH T (High Risk Rural Roads) project is completed the Highway Crew will then be taking care of the tree cutting and brushing needs on that project. The crew will be taking care of the brushing in order to avoid the Oak Wilt season and the resulting costs will then be used toward the local match. The High Risk Rural Roads program is a Federal Safety program that provides 90% of the funding for the improvements with the remaining 10% coming from the local program sponsor, in this case La Crosse County.

Thank you for your continued support for Highway operations, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Ronald Chamberlain*

# MONTHLY REPORT TO THE COUNTY BOARD

## Judiciary & Law December 2016

### Emergency Services

Emergency Services would like to thank the County Board for its consideration and approval of the 2017 Budget which include support for equipment upgrades for both the public safety radio and 9-1-1 phone systems. With the constantly changing technologies, these upgrades are needed to provide responders with the vital public safety tools used extensively every day.

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

The severe flash flooding that occurred on September 21-22, 2016 resulted in damages to dozens of road segments in La Crosse County. A Presidential Disaster Declaration was received on October 20. Numerous "kick off" meetings with FEMA and WI Emergency Management personnel, County EM and municipal officials were held during October and November to review disaster recovery projects. It is anticipated the disaster grant program will continue through 2017 before all projects are complete.

Over \$1 million in flood damages were reported in La Crosse County, which includes a \$550,000 estimate for new damages to Bliss Road. The initial FEMA damage assessment team did not allocate disaster funds for Bliss Road but referred the project to the disaster mitigation program for consideration. Twelve municipalities (including the County Highway Department and County Facilities Department) were approved for consideration in the Presidential Disaster Declaration (DR-4288).

Other EM events of note:

- County EM facilitated a tabletop exercise for the Town of Holland on October 5 using a severe storm and power outage scenario to review the Town's recently updated emergency plan.
- County EM attended the Wisconsin Emergency Management Association conference in Green Bay on October 11-13.
- County EM provided a disaster preparedness presentation at Viterbo on October 14.
- County EM assisted with a lock-down drill at the Western Technical College on October 19.
- The County Mass Casualty Team met in West Salem on Sunday, October 30 to test emergency lighting equipment and the 15-patient oxygen supply system. Several trailers are showing continued challenges with being left outdoors.
- County EM attended the WI Emergency Management West Central Regional meeting in Pepin County on November 9.
- The Local Emergency Planning Committee met on November 16.
- County EM presented disaster declaration process information during the County Towns Association meeting in West Salem on November 17.

### Public Safety Communications

September

Telephone Calls

9-1-1 Calls 2,802 (average of 93 per day)  
Answered within 10 seconds: 97.14%  
Answered within 20 seconds: 99.93%  
Average Answer Time: 4 seconds  
*\*2 calls of more than 20 seconds*

78% of 9-1-1 calls were from wireless phones.

Total Telephone Calls 24,718 (average of 824 per day)

**Calls for Service**

Law Enforcement	9,806
Fire Fighting	190
Emergency Medical	666

**October**

**Telephone Calls**

9-1-1 Calls 2,547 (average of 92 per day)  
Answered within 10 seconds: 97.45%  
Answered within 20 seconds: 99.73%  
Average Answer Time: 4 seconds  
*\* 2 calls of more than 30 seconds*

80% of 9-1-1 calls were from wireless phones.

Total Telephone Calls 23,089 (average of 745 per day)

**Calls for Service**

Law Enforcement	9,487
Fire Fighting	211
Emergency Medical	660

*\*National Emergency Number Association Standards:*

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

Public Safety Communications will be testing applicants to develop an eligibility list for Telecommunicators in January. Currently there is one opening after a resignation in November. Tim Robers resigned to take a position with the Volk Field Fire Department. Tim had been part of the dispatch team since May of 2013.

*Jay Loeffler, Administrator  
Emergency Services*

**Corporation Counsel Office**

1. Claims Update

- An annual claims update was provided to the Board at the October meeting. There have been no significant changes since that time.

2. Ordinance Updates

- Our office is working with the Zoning Department on a redrafting of Chapter 20 – Shoreland Zoning to incorporate recent changes.
3. Department Assistance- Our office continues to provide legal counsel to various Departments as issues arise. Recent issues include:
- *Solid Waste Department* –
    - Continue to work on Contractual issues involving the extension of the Xcel contract-negotiations are continuing and appear to be nearing resolution. We hope to have something before the Committee/Board for the January cycle.
  - *Child Support* – We continue to provide legal assistance as the need arises as well as providing representation of the agency at regularly scheduled court hearings. In addition, the Child Support has started e-filing documents and our office has been involved with the Child Support office in this change.
  - *Economic Development* – We have been involved in several issues, including the following:
    - *Continued work on the Intergovernmental Agreement and MOU for International Business Park II.*
  - *Treasurer*- Continue to work with Treasurer's office on sale of various tax foreclosure properties.
  - *Personnel* – Our office continues to assist on various miscellaneous employee issues and labor matters.
  - *Highway Department*- Work with the Highway Commissioner on various highway policies and legal issues, including remaining issues in the OA condemnation appeal cases.
  - *Clerk of Courts* – Our office has been working with the Clerk of Courts and the Associate County Administrator to develop new contracts with court appointed attorneys/GAL.

4. Miscellaneous Matters

- Our office continues to respond to Open Records requests as received.
- Our office continues to be involved in issues related to the downtown development, including beginning discussions regarding purchase of condominium parking spaces on Lot C and finalizing the terms of an easement granted to STIZO Development for access to parking adjacent to the administrative center.

5. Staffing

- We anticipate filling the vacant attorney position in our office in early 2017.

6. Court

Our office continues to represent the Human Services Department and the Child Support Agency at all court proceedings, including child protection cases, termination of parental rights, mental commitments, guardianships and protective placement, paternity establishment, and child support establishment and enforcement. We attend between 15-20 court hearings a week.

As we near the end of the year, almost annual statistics include the following:

CHIPS cases	117
TPR cases	13
Juvenile guardianships	16
Ch 54/55 (adult guardianships and protective placements)	180
Ch 51 (mental health)	148

Respectfully Submitted,

*Megan L. DeVore*  
Corporation Counsel

## **Child Support Agency**

On December 21<sup>st</sup> the agency will be celebrating the first anniversary of our move to the Law Enforcement Center. We are very happy and pleased with our space in the LEC and feel very fortunate to have such a wonderful work environment.

There have been a several comings and goings this past year. We are again fully staffed after the retirement of our Secretary/Receptionist in March and our Legal Secretary in August. The new staff members have settled in and are doing well. We also welcomed new Assistant Corporation Counsel, Stephen Woodward who comes to us with a lot of knowledge and experience. We congratulate Dave Lange on his retirement. He will be missed, but we wish him all the best in this new phase in his life. We also congratulate Megan DeVore on her appointment to Corporation Counsel, we know she will do a great job.

On September 15<sup>th</sup> we began mandatory eFiling for all documents filed with the court. This is a huge change for us and it has been challenging. We are collaborating with the Clerk of Courts office and judicial officials to make the new system work for all of us.

On November 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> we held an "Enforcement Redesign" Value Stream Mapping (VSM) event related to Lean-Management techniques in order to examine our current process for enforcing child support orders. It has been shown that incarcerating individuals that are delinquent in their support payments isn't always the most effective way to get people to pay their support obligation.

Two of our attorney's and four staff members teamed up with representatives from the Family Court Commissioners Office, the La Crosse County Jail, and Workforce Connections to examine the steps in our current enforcement process. One of the most significant results of the VSM was the development of a plan for individuals who are delinquent in their child support payments to avoid being found in contempt of their court order and subsequent incarceration.

We have found that many delinquent child support payers have barriers that prevent them from obtaining and/or maintaining meaningful employment. Workforce Connections has a variety of programs that can assist qualifying individuals overcome barriers to employment that will enable them to support their children both financially and emotionally. Value

stream mapping assisted the team in establishing measurable goals and ongoing evaluation of the plan. We are hoping that this new process will allow children to receive the financial support they deserve as well as improve the agency's ability to reach performance goals.

Respectfully submitted,

*Deb Barnes, Manager  
La Crosse County CSA*

## **Family Court Commissioner ("FCC") Office**

**GENERAL:** We are a two-person office. The Family Court maintains five-set calendars every week. They are as follows:

Tuesdays: Domestic Abuse/Harassment Injunctions (morning)  
Child Support (afternoon)

Thursdays: Paternity (morning)

Fridays: Default divorces (morning)  
Domestic Abuse/Harassment Injunctions (morning)

The FCC Office assists a constant influx of attorneys and litigants with filings related to those five-set weekly calendars in addition to the matters appearing on the general calendar. Many litigants appear pro se—without legal counsel.

### **UPDATES:**

1. Family Round Table: The Family Law Roundtable is a forum designed to address current family law issues and their impact on families and the community. Others who attend this forum include family law attorneys, child development professionals, mediation office personnel, the WTC paralegal program chair, Judges, DA Office, and the Child Support Agency. Family Roundtables are held on the first Tuesday of the month.

Tom Johnson was the speaker at the November meeting. Mr. Johnson is employed by the West Central Metropolitan Enforcement Group Drug Unit. Mr. Johnson coordinates drug cases between 17 law enforcement agencies in La Crosse, Vernon, Monroe, Trempealeau and Jackson counties. He discussed the chronic use and impact of heroin, methamphetamines, and marijuana as well as the recent resurgence of cocaine. Drug use has a significant impact on families, in general, and on placement and custody decisions, in particular. The Family Court utilizes the services of The Parenting Place and Justice Support Services when parent litigants have alcohol and/or drug issues.

2. Court: The e-filing system started mid-September. This Court, attorneys and litigants are adapting to these changes.
3. Collaboration with Child Support Agency and Corporation Counsel: This Department is working with these two agencies to improve child support enforcement by, among other things, the implementation of referrals to Work Force Connections. The Child Support Agency has arranged for Work Force Connections to present at the Judges Meeting on December 20, 2016 and later that same day with the FCC Office, Clerk of Courts, Probation & Parole, Economic Support and the Public Defenders Office.

4. Courtroom Security Training: On November 9, 2016, Court Services provided an interactive training for this Department and other courthouse stakeholders.
5. Kosovo Delegation: On November 14, 2016, FCC Wright along with Circuit Court Judges Gloria Doyle, Elliot Levine and Michael Rosborough met with a delegation from Kosovo to discuss Domestic/Gender-based Violence: Victim's Rights. The Kosovo Delegation included a judge, two prosecutors, a victim's advocate and a senior legal officer in the Ministry of Justice-Government of Republic of Kosovo. The participants discussed the below topics:
  - a. The judiciary's role in a comprehensive response to domestic and gender-based violence;
  - b. The training of judges and attorneys in domestic violence;
  - c. Partnerships with police, advocates, health care providers, criminal justice actors, child protection services, health care providers, and organizations working with victims and immigrant communities; and
  - d. Judicial discretion in sentencing and accountability for offenders.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Elizabeth Wright, Family Court Commissioner*

## **Medical Examiner**

We are happy to report that things have slowed down a little in the latter part of this year. Our suicide numbers have shown a decline and are not on any record pace. People ask why, but there really is no good explanation for this trend. The myth that suicide rates go up a little during the holiday season does not appear to be a norm here. In La Crosse County there is no real time of the year that really sticks out. The leading cause of suicide in La Crosse County is split between relationships, and hopelessness in living anymore. Men are still more likely to commit suicide than women in La Crosse County, but the gap is closing a little. The most popular means of self-harm is gunshot and overdose methods. This year, as of this report writing, we are at 14 suicides which is below the average we have been seeing in the last few years.

Drug overdoses are another story. We are currently around 22 overdoses this year with some numbers still pending. We are seeing drugs all over the board with heroin, meth and prescription medication as factors in the overdose cases.

We are currently getting our 2 new deputies up to speed on their training. By the end of the year they should be on their own for conducting investigations. We are also on pace to surpass our record for investigations this year. We are closing in on 500 cases for the year.

Currently we are still working on our Mass Fatality Plan which we wanted to have finished in December. Being that we are inundated with cases, we are looking to have this completed in early 2017. We will be having an open house sometime in late January in our new office and offering tours of the morgue. For anyone wishing to do a ride along, the offer is still there. Feel free to contact us in Suite 1730 Law Enforcement Center or phone 785-9638.

Here is wishing you and your families a safe and happy holidays from the Medical Examiner's Office!

Submitted Respectfully,

*Tim Candahl, Medical Examiner*