

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CENTRAL DISPATCH

Surcharge Funding – Worked diligently to secure surcharge funding through long-awaited legislation. This legislation provides for collection of 911 surcharge funding through 2013.

Dispatch Regionalization Project – Part of a group in Region 7 to apply for and was awarded 1.3 million dollars through the Homeland Security to research the feasibility of dispatch regionalization. Investigating the potential benefits of consolidating 911. In the process of hiring a consultant to assist in moving forward with this project.

Staffing – The complexity and demands of 911 dispatching requires a lengthy and intensive training program of which many new employees are unable to complete the training program successfully. Next to funding, staffing is a challenge both nationally as well as locally. Two goals completed in 2008 to assist in strengthening the staff are the implementation of the Call-Taker position which would focus on incoming telephone calls thus providing other personnel with the opportunity to focus on radio traffic demands. Secondly, a training session was hosted in order to acquire six additional dispatchers certified as training officers. This acquisition of in-house certified trainers will alleviate some of the burn-out and frustration experienced when there are only a few trainers.

COMMISSION ON AGING

Program Expansion – Expanded Commission on Aging programs resulting in an increase of 10,368 hours/units of service to an additional 210 senior citizens in Grand Traverse County.

Personal Emergency Response Program - Expanded from 140 to 284 units.

File of Life – Continued distribution of File of Life packets - worked with the Traverse City Fire Department to distribute over 6,500 packets to Grand Traverse County senior citizens for use in the event of an emergency.

Recycled Cell Phones – Distributed 67 recycled cell phones to Grand Traverse County senior citizens for emergency 911 use.

Grab Bars – Installed 99 sets of grab bars in the homes of Grand Traverse County senior citizens to help prevent falls.

Holiday Gift Baskets – Prepared and delivered 105 holiday gift baskets to Grand Traverse County senior citizens during the holidays.

Emergency Financial Assistance – Provided \$73,000 in emergency financial assistance to 160 Grand Traverse County low income senior citizens. This \$73,000 also benefited local businesses that assisted our senior citizens.

Durable Medical Equipment – Assisted 279 senior citizens with durable medical equipment – wheelchairs, walkers, bath benches, canes – through the Commission on Aging loan closet.

Income Tax Preparation – Income tax preparation site for Grand Traverse County senior citizens – served 252 senior citizens.

NMC BBQ – Coordinated the Northwestern Michigan College BBQ home-delivered meal program. Packaged and delivered 335 BBQ meals to Grand Traverse County senior citizens, with the help of many volunteers.

Requests for Information – Responded to an additional 6,169 requests for information.

Fingerprinting – Began fingerprinting all staff to assure added safety for all clients.

Commission on Aging Board Meetings – Began video recording Commission on Aging board meetings and broadcasting them on TCTV2 and the Government Channel (Channel 99).

Funding to Outside Agencies – Provided over \$37,000 in funding to outside agencies for home-delivered meals, senior companions, senior center support, transportation assistance, and Area Agency on Aging support.

Assessment Aide – Added an Assessment Aide to the staff to improve communication with clients and to assist senior citizens in getting needed assistance.

Training Program – Implemented a training program for staff to assure quality customer service.

Respite Care – Implemented a respite care marketing campaign to inform the public about Commission on Aging respite care assistance.

Strategic Plan – Completed the 2009-2013 Commission on Aging Strategic Plan.

Home Heating/Energy Assistance – Provided 20 clients (14 households) with \$8,200 in home heating/energy assistance through a grant provided by the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation.

BATA Passes – In cooperation with the Bay Area Transportation Authority (BATA), provided 43 bus passes to senior citizens for medical transportation after termination of the HealthRide program.

COUNTY CLERK

Circuit Court Records – Moved the office of Circuit Court Records from the 3rd floor to the 1st floor of the historic courthouse. Over 15,000 court files were moved to the new location by staff.

Family Court Records – Implemented imaging program in Family Court Records.

Elections – Successfully administered four major elections. Processed 3,100 voter registrations from May 1, 2008 to October 6, 2008.

Marriage Licenses – Online marriage license applications made available.

State of Michigan – Began electronic transmission of criminal abstracts to the State of Michigan.

DRAIN COMMISSIONER

Reorganization Efforts – One of the best accomplishments to come out of this office was our reorganization efforts, streamlining the erosion control services division to be more customer focused. Promoted cross-training opportunities so our customers will receive the best service possible.

Became even more efficient in tasks associated with administration and commercial services. With reduced staffing, we have maintained all services, while demands have also increased, for our time associated with tasks related to compliance. We continue to spend time on and have succeeded in the task of closing out a backlog of more than 350 permits to date. We have also implemented a post card mailer system to assist in these community efforts.

With reduced staffing and overhead costs, we have also managed many more calls of concern from residential neighbors, mostly based on aesthetics or other issues not requiring a permit. Additionally, helpful calls from our watchful citizens greatly assisted our efforts of investigating the increasing occurrences of earth change projects being started before a valid permit is issued. Timely, effective responses, and explaining the laws to our citizens, to compel compliance, have been key components of our resolutions.

Reducing Costs – Reducing costs while maintaining services remains our primary objective. In 2008, we reduced our office expenditures by 18% or \$54,000 over 2007. Our approach to managing storm water drainage on each site development has also reduced burdens and costs to taxpayers of adjacent developments. Our environmental management system represents our ongoing commitment to being responsible stewards of our Counties' land and water resources.

EQUALIZATION

Digital Tax Maps – The City of Traverse City was added to the Countywide framework project previously completed by our Department. GPS using real-time technology was used to accurately locate existing section corners, ¼ corners, meander corners and center posts. This involved a digital breakdown of sections to the 1/8 line. The result of this project is 10 cm accuracy or approximately 4 inches at the GPS located points. This addition allowed our Department to assist with new digital tax maps for the City.

This progress from paper maps to digital tax maps continues. Acme Township, Blair Township, Green Lake Township, and Long Lake Township are completed. East Bay Township, Peninsula Township, Whitewater Township and the City of Traverse City are currently being processed. Digital tax maps are 80% less costly to produce and maintain as compared to paper maps. Maps provide an inventory of the county.

Point-Based Address System – A new address point layer containing the location of the address structure was completed. Acme Township, Blair Township, East Bay Township, Fife Lake Township, Garfield Township, Grant Township, Green Lake Township, Long Lake Township, Mayfield Township, Paradise Township, Peninsula Township, Union Township, Whitewater Township, and Traverse City are completed. A grant was received from the Tribe and a temporary employee was hired to complete this project. This allows links to any database with a standardized property address such as the current application which links construction code data nightly to the GIS web application. It also is benefiting 911, County Treasurer, and others.

GIS Application – The Grand Traverse County on-line GIS application has been deployed to County employees, townships, and is currently live to the public. Several new features have been added such as trails and the delinquent tax parcels for the County Treasurer.

ArcIMS GIS application training has been provided to Acme Township, Blair Township, East Bay Township, Green Lake Township, Long Lake Township, Paradise Township, and Peninsula Township. A public session was provided at the Library.

County Plat Book – The 4th edition of the County Plat Book (data maintained by GIS staff) was released. Our department was asked to take over this function from the MSU extension.

Homeowner's Principal Residence Exemption Audits/Personal Property Audits – Grand Traverse County continues to lead the State of Michigan in this effort. Laurie Spencer was asked to serve on a task force for HPRE audits as well as a committee which selected a vendor to develop a database for the State of Michigan to assist with the auditing process. We also assisted that vendor in testing of the new product which will be available for all opt-in Counties in Michigan for Homestead Audits.

East Bay Charter Township Assessing – This project continues to go well. Staff has site reviewed over 4,000 parcels. Staff has also researched and returned parcels to the rolls which were missing, corrected legal descriptions, uncappings, land divisions, and other assessing tasks.

Equalization Studies – Staff continues to make process improvements to equalization studies including using disto measuring device, blue tooth technology, photos, sketches, Tablet PC, and reports developed using vendor software.

Equalization Database – Equalization database is now available to all county employees with access to the network to view. A new feature is tax bill information on each parcel.

Road Centerline – Readjustment of the road centerline layer in the GIS system has been accomplished with the aid of the new framework and the new orthophotography.

Central Dispatch Support – GIS staff provides a tremendous amount of support to Central Dispatch. Central Dispatch went to a new CAD system which is more GIS oriented, and they are using the address point file and the landmark layer developed by the Equalization Department.

GIS System – New information is continually being added or maintained in the GIS system such as several new zoning layers and subs and condos.

Delivery Log – Set up a delivery log for assessors to assist them in complying with the 14-point review with the Department of Treasury. The assessors have found it helpful.

Personal Property Canvas – Personal Property canvas was completed by using the GIS and having a map of DBA/Personal Property parcels all mapped out by area, not by addresses. All personal property legal descriptions have been filled

in and updated. BS&A database is being coded for what kind of personal property each is, so next year's canvas can be more productive.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Historical Courthouse – Major remodel of the interior office space at the Historical Courthouse.

Historical Courthouse – Installation of new energy efficient windows (exterior) at the Historical Courthouse.

Energy Efficiency Improvements – Installation of energy efficient equipment including a boiler at the Health Service Building, air make-up unit at the Howe Arena, and air make-up unit at the jail (group holding cell).

FINANCIAL

Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting - For the third year in a row, the County received a certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting for our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

Imaging Application – Successfully implemented the imaging application for accounts payable processing and other applications in Finance.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

WIC – Infant enrollment has increased from 70% of Munson Grand Traverse County births in 2006 to over 80% in 2008. Families are eligible at 185% of poverty so many who do not qualify for Medicaid do qualify for WIC.

Initiated electronic benefit cards for WIC clients. This eliminated the need for issuance of WIC coupons and streamlined the systems delivery.

Baby Comfort Station – The Health Department's Baby Comfort Station at the National Cherry Festival had hundreds of visitors for diaper changing, feeding, and sun block for babies attending the festival.

Lead Testing – Lead testing has increased in Grand Traverse County from 18% of eligible children tested in 2006 to 51% of eligible children tested in 2008. GTCHD has been a leader in the community in promoting awareness, testing, and managing elevated results.

Fresh Local Foods – Fresh fruits and vegetables as well as whole grains are being added to the WIC food choices in the fall of 2009. WIC and Michigan Land Use Institute are partnering to ensure the availability and accessibility of fresh local foods for WIC participants.

Reproductive Health Services – Over 3,000 people received Reproductive Health Services such as family planning, sexually transmitted diseases, and abstinence counseling.

Hearing and Vision Testing – Over 11,000 children received Hearing and Vision testing, and over 4,200 were immunized by the Health Department in 2008.

Planning Grant – Successfully obtained Planning Grant for a school based-linked clinic in Kingsley, Michigan.

Emergency Planning Event – Planned and executed a community-wide Emergency Planning event in October, 2008 to simulate distribution of medication through the Strategic National Stockpile (10 flu clinics in one day). About 1,000 were immunized during this exercise for influenza.

Participation with Local Emergency Planning Committee and Local Planning Team committees.

Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan – Requests of local government to adopt the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan.

Disease Trends – Close collaboration with Munson Medical Center and the Grand Traverse County Health Department monitoring disease trends, health care, and potential for pandemics of biological events.

Police, Fire, and EMS Activities – Board activity and close monitoring of Police, Fire, and EMS activities.

Hazardous Material Planning – Local Hazardous Material Planning activities with private industry.

Training – Sponsoring training for local responders and citizens.

Local Resources – Networking with untapped local resources i.e. RACES (Ham Radio), CAP (Civic Air Patrol), USCG (United States Coast Guard), ARC (American Red Cross), Salvation Army, and local broadcasters (Public Service Announcements).

Beach Monitoring Policy/Procedures – Updated Beach Monitoring Policy/Procedures to include “Weekly Beach Reports” to public/media utilizing a “water quality index” reporting system.

Public Beach Signs – Worked in collaboration with the Beach Stake Holders Group to update signage at public beaches on East and West Grand Traverse Bays to make them more understandable to the public.

Watercraft Monitoring – Worked in collaboration with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to increase monitoring of watercraft on West Grand Traverse Bay during the summer season to inspect and educate the public regarding holding tank discharge.

Beach Monitoring Advisory System – Public presentation at the Traverse City Commission Meeting June, 2008 regarding the new beach monitoring advisory system utilizing the water quality index advisory system.

Beach monitoring presentation to high school/middle school students at the Water Watch 13th Annual Student River Congress sponsored by Northwestern Michigan College, Great Lakes Campus/Water Studies Institute. Included classroom lecture time as well as field trips to Clinch Park Beach.

Web Site – Updated the Health Department web site regarding beach monitoring, which included a listing of all surface water E. coli test results throughout the swimming season.

Ordinance Amendment – Worked in collaboration with the City of Traverse City to enact an ordinance amendment entitled “Prohibition of Bird and Waterfowl Feeding Near Waterways, in City Parks and in the Core Downtown Area” effective March 27, 2008.

E. Coli Counts – Performed immediate (same day) re-sampling at beaches after elevated E. coli counts and reported 18 hours later (next morning). This decreased the time that beach advisories were posted.

Commendation – Thomas Buss received the “Hometown Health Hero” award on April 22, 2008 from the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) for spearheading an initiative to reduce E. coli levels on East and West Grand Traverse Bays.

Certification – Ed Hickey, Animal Control Manager, was certified by the Michigan Association of Animal Control Officers (MAACO) in “Chemical Immobilization of Animals.”

Training – Trained two (2) new Animal Control Officers for Benzie County.

Vehicle Replacement – Replaced two (2) aging full-sized Animal Control pick-up trucks with newer mid-sized, more fuel efficient pick-ups.

Adoption Collaboration – The Animal Control Division collaborated with Pet Safe Rescue Alliance and the Cherryland Humane Society to find good homes for adoptable dogs which were not owner redeemed.

The Animal Control Division collaborated with A.C. Paws, Pet Safe Rescue Alliance, and the Cherryland Humane Society to offer guidance to Grand Traverse Area Human Services Agencies to assist individuals in surrendering their pets during this time of economic difficulty.

Pet Licensing – Developed an informational brochure entitled “Pet Licensing, Identification and More...” which was distributed to approximately 20 local veterinarian offices to educate pet owners on a variety of issues.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Training Day - In 2008, over 225 employees attended, providing a variety of eight different sessions which provided both personal and professional growth opportunities.

The Segal Study – Received and distributed the results; coordinated presentations of results; communicated result to the Board as well as employees and bargaining unit representatives. Collected, documented, and categorized staff questions and concerns. Coordinated communication of responses back to employees. Received appeal paperwork for non-union positions.

Rx Plan – Eliminated the \$10/20 Rx plan.

On-Line Applications – In March, 2008 went live with the on-line application and applicant tracking system.

Position Openings – Recruited employees for 65 job openings; nine employees received employees.

Benefits – Received, reviewed, and analyzed quotes for Worker’s Compensation, Life & AD&D, Short-Term Disability, and Long-Term Disability insurances. Changed carriers for Life and Short-Term Disability, saving the County over \$17,000. Also received quotes and reviewed the EAP and Wellness plans.

Union Negotiations – Entered into negotiations with seven bargaining units, two of which reached tentative agreement in 2008.

Arbitration – Total of 15 grievances filed; two to Arbitration and ultimately denied by Arbitrator. Three grievances pending Arbitration in 2009. Two Unfair Labor Practice charges were filed which were eventually withdrawn in 2008.

Investigation – Ten investigations completed by H.R. Staff, some with the assistance of legal counsel.

County Policies – Review of all county policies with legal counsel (close to finalizing).

Bloodborne Pathogen Policy and Procedures – Updated and finalized the Bloodborne Pathogen policy and procedures.

Employee Recognition Initiatives – Continued the new “personalized” annual service anniversary recognition program; conducted 2nd Annual Co-Worker Appreciation Week in December; and presented the “Go the Extra Mile” award celebrating employees who routinely practice random acts of kindness. Continued service award program and “Breakfast with the Chairman” program.

Health Risk Appraisals – 135 employees participated.

Let's Get Moving Northern Michigan – This 100-day program ran from the end of May until the second week of August. Grand Traverse County had a total of 49 employees who completed the program and were eligible for an incentive prize of either a backpack or a water bottle.

Wellness Expo – Approximately 275 attended this event.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

Document Imaging – Document imaging implementation for the Friend of the Court, Prosecutor, Family Court Records, and Finance.

Video Recording and Video Streaming – Commission chambers video recording and most recently the addition of video streaming over the Internet.

Virtual Server – Consolidation of 19 Windows servers into a virtual server environment using three physical servers.

Surveillance Cameras – Civic Center surveillance cameras.

Historic Courthouse Remodel – Voice/data network upgrade.

Connection of County Sites – Connection of six (6) county sites utilizing the Traverse City Light and Power fiber loop.

Telecommunications – Upgraded the voice mail server at the Governmental Center and consolidated voice mail from Public Services eliminating the voice mail server at the Public Services location.

MSU EXTENSION

Tribal Governance Capacity Building Program – Created and implemented a Tribal Governance Capacity Building Program, called “Building Strong Sovereign

Nations,” with the 12 Tribes of Michigan furthering collaboration with other Governmental units.

Well Water Testing – Provided free water well testing to 385 residents of Grand Traverse County.

Parenting and Parent as Teachers Education – Conducted Parenting and Parent as Teachers Education to Grand Traverse County residents:

- Parents as Teachers - 95% of parents reported an increase in parenting skills as a result of participation in Parents as Teacher’s home visits.

Cherry Connection Program – Several hundred people, many visitors to our area, learned about the production of cherries and the many utilizations of the fruit in fresh, processed, and nutraceutical products:

- 87% of participants said that they learned a new fact about cherries or a new use for cherries after participation in Cherry Connection, a National Cherry Festival cherry promotion event.
- 92% of participants said that they plan to purchase local cherry product in the future after participation.

Senior Project Fresh/Project Fresh – 514 low-income seniors and young moms with children increased their dietary quality through consumption of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables through Project Fresh and Senior Project Fresh.

4-H Grow and Learn School Garden Project – Implemented the 4-H Grow and Learn School garden project in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club at Traverse City West Middle School to provide youth with opportunities to learn about food and nutrition choices and to expand science learning options in school, after-school, and summer programs.

Community Ties to Entrepreneurship Program – Initiated Community Ties to Entrepreneurship programming, beginning with students at Traverse City West Senior High who are engaged in a MSU distance-learning course designed to develop an online resource that informs their peers about vocational, volunteer, and other resources through social networking with each other, local enterprises, and nonprofits.

Northwest Michigan Orchard and Vineyard Show – Hundreds of participants obtained the latest information on tree fruit and grape production and related environmental and economic issues.

Vineyard Establishment Workshop – Participants received two days of in-depth educational sessions which enabled them to plan, establish, and manage high-quality winegrape plantings in northwest Michigan.

Grand Traverse/Leelanau Master Gardener Program – Over thirty adult students were trained in many aspects of gardening and home horticulture, and each person will contribute 40 hours of volunteer time in our community helping others learn gardening and horticultural topics.

Boardman River Nature Center Grand Opening – A three-day event that brought together personnel from the Grand Traverse Conservation District, MSU Extension, governmental agencies, and private authorities to introduce this new facility to people of the Grand Traverse Region.

PARKS AND RECREATION

College Internship Program – Developed a College Internship Program.

New Programs – Held several new programs including Rough, Tough, Trucks, Walk Michigan, Customer Appreciation Day, and Go Skateboarding Day.

Maple Bay Master Plan – Adopted the Maple Bay Master Plan to include predominantly passive recreation activities.

General Park Rules – Adopted General Park Rules, with future development of individualized park rules.

MRPA Statewide Conference – Hosted MRPA Statewide Conference with approximately 500 attendees at the Grand Traverse Resort.

PLANNING

Brownfield Redevelopment Authority

- City Commissioners – Implemented the participation and membership from the City Commissioners.
- DEQ Loan – Successful in receiving another \$1,000,000 Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) loan for the Grand Traverse Commons, making Grand Traverse County the most successful in utilization of grant and loan dollars for Brownfield projects.
- State Participation – Successful in negotiating with the State for participation in the Old Town Parking Deck by expanding the Brownfield plan to include adjacent and contiguous properties; utilizing tax increment

financing (TIF); and receiving a \$1,000,000 State grant which was in itself a notable project since it took a lot of effort to bring the State to the table; and finally, successful in receiving State participation for two additional projects (101 North Park Street, 701 West Front Street and 305 West Front Street).

Economic Development Corporation – First, worked with County Board to create a new Economic Development Corporation Board with separate members from the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and to bring more representation from community industries; secondly, continued working with the State on improving economic strategies for community; and finally, closed on two loans in Grand Traverse County which created over 15 new jobs.

Planning Commission – First, developed a long-range Capital Improvement Plan for the County; secondly, developed and presented the Planning Commission Chair training workshop; and finally, successfully received the Partnerships for Change grant for joint planning for Kingsley and Paradise Township.

RESOURCE RECOVERY

“Take It Back” Program – Developed a Take It Back program to provide County residents a convenient product return infrastructure, where consumers can return unwanted products to providers/businesses. The Take It Back program is promoted through the www.RecycleSmart.info website and other cost-effective marketing initiatives.

HHW Collection Events – Held 4 HHW collection events. An estimated 800 County residents/businesses participated in the events dropping off 62,941 pounds of HHW, pesticides and mercury.

Electronic Collection Events – Co-sponsored 2 Electronic collection events. An estimated 600+ Grand Traverse County residents participated and recycled over 95,750 pounds of computers, monitors, printers, fax machines, stereos, cell phones and televisions.

RecycleSmart e-Newsletter – Introduced the RecycleSmart e-Newsletter. The newsletter provides residents with the most up to date information on the Resource Recovery Department and the programs and services it offers. The newsletter is electronically sent to registered subscribers on a monthly basis.

Earth for Earth Day – Coordinated a downtown event that distributed 100 yards of free compost to County Residents.

Clean Out Your Files Week – Coordinated a downtown event that allowed area merchants to clean their old files. 4 tons of paper was recycled.

The RecycleSmart Kids Website Link – Developed an educational link on the RecycleSmart website for kids. It provides area youth an opportunity to learn about recycling in a fun and interesting format. The “Story of Stuff” is just one of the lessons that youth and adults will enjoy viewing.

Community Education and Outreach – Provided recycling information and sponsored educational booths at community events to inform residents and businesses on the recycling and waste diversion options offered by the Resource Recovery Department. Staff participated in educational events at the Habitat for Humanity Garden Show, Home Builders Expo, Blair Township “Connecting People with Resources & Information Day, National Cherry Festival/DTE Energy Environmental Day, Green Solution (GS4) Expo, Boardman River Nature Center, Northwestern Michigan Fair, Traverse City State Park and Great Lakes BIONEERS Conference.

TREASURER

Land Bank Authority

Habitat for Humanity – First, worked with Habitat for Humanity to provide two new Habitat homes in East Bay Township, both homes were built in 2008. Secondly, worked with Habitat for Humanity for another home to be built in Garfield Township.