



## Administrator's Update 2/9/09

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✚ **2009 Organizational Meeting** - On January 2, 2009, the County Board of Commissioners took an oath of office for the next 2 years. The County Board welcomed three new members: Ross Richardson - Traverse City, Beth Friend - East Bay Township, and Mike Stepka - Garfield Township. The new board elected Dick Thomas as the Chairman for the years 2009-2010 and Larry Inman as Vice Chairman for 2009. At the Organizational Meeting, they adopted rules for the County Board and set committee assignments. The committee meeting times will remain the same for 2009. The County Board decided to hold all monthly County Board Meetings, which are held on the last Wednesday of each month, at the Governmental Center in Traverse City and, for the present time, discontinue the practice of holding eight County Board meetings at the township offices on a rotating basis. All County Board and committee meetings are available for viewing live and on-demand. Visit [www.grandtraverse.org](http://www.grandtraverse.org) and click on the "Meeting Videos" link for meeting viewing information, packets and agendas. In addition, meetings are broadcast live on Channel 99 and rebroadcast each week on Sunday starting at 1:00pm.


✚ **New Commissioner Orientation** - The new County Commissioners have been hard at work learning the operations of the County. The County has held orientation sessions for the new Commissioners, which were also attended by incumbent Commissioners. The new Commissioners have spent a number of full days meeting with departments to go over department operations and to get a general understanding of county government operations. We look forward to the next several years of working together on County issues.


✚ **Historic Courthouse Construction** - The construction contract for the remodeling of the historic courthouse is complete and has been finalized with final payment made. There are still a few minor items to be completed by staff, which include some painting and cabinet installation. The State Probation Office has moved into the facility and staffing of the facility is now complete. The Robert P. Griffin Hall of Justice is nearing completion. The last remaining issue was one of humidification for the building. We have been experiencing low levels of humidity, especially in the winter months, which has caused some cracking of wall treatments in the courtrooms. The Building Authority is currently looking for bids to seek and install humidification in the building and will consider those over the next few weeks. If the bids come in on budget and the humidification is installed, several wall areas will be repaired by the contractor, that contract will be closed out, and the project will be complete.


✚ **2010 Strategic Planning Process** - As you may have read in the newspaper, the County Board has begun their 2010 Strategic Planning process. Two public hearings were held during the month of January at which the public was invited to come in and make their desires for County services known for the next year. Approximately 100 people attended each meeting held. The first meeting gave citizens the opportunity to voice their opinions about services and projects the County should work on in the future. The second meeting gave citizens the opportunity to vote on how they wanted to prioritize the recommended objectives made by the public for the County Board to consider for 2010. In addition, the public prioritized the seven goals set by the County Board in terms of their importance. The results of the study can be seen on the homepage of the County website at


[www.grandtraverse.org](http://www.grandtraverse.org). In addition, both of these meetings are available for viewing on-demand. Visit [www.grandtraverse.org](http://www.grandtraverse.org) and click on the “Meeting Videos” link for meeting viewing information, packets and agendas.


The County Board will now take under advisement the suggestions that the citizens have made and will finalize their goals and objectives for 2010 beginning in March. Once the County Board has completed their goals for 2010, they will be distributed to the County departments so that they can align their 2010 goals with the County Boards’. Once that is completed, the departments will then build their budget requests for 2010 for the County Board to consider in September with the budget being adopted at the end of October. Once the budget has been adopted and resources have been allocated, the departments will be asked to go back and re-evaluate their ability to meet their 2010 goals based on their resource allocation. We are very pleased with this process and were glad to see the public participation that we received in our first attempt at including the public formally in the Strategic Planning process. We expect that this will only become more important in future years as resources become scarcer.


 **Boardman River Dams Committee Presentation** - The Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners and The City of Traverse City met on Monday, January 26, to hear the presentation from the Environmental Consulting & Technology (ECT) Consultants and the Boardman River Dams Committee (BRDC) on their recommendations following a 2.5 year public process. The County owns two dams on the Boardman River and the City owns two dams on the Boardman River. The BRDC made a series of recommendations. In summary, they recommend that Union Street Dam stays and that the other three dams - Brown Bridge, Boardman, and Sabin - all be removed or all be kept in place. They also encouraged that hydro-power generation be further explored by the County and the City and that the public be kept in the process. The County and the City would like to work together on a decision. The leadership of the City Commission and the County Board will be meeting over the next couple of weeks to put together a proposed game plan for the two boards to consider in regards to how to move forward. Grand Traverse County is under a consent decree with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) that requires the engineering of a potential decision to be completed by September of this year. If the County decides to keep the dams, the dams must be brought up to State of Michigan guidelines by December 31, 2010. If the County decides to remove the dams, they must be removed by December 31, 2012. This meeting is available for viewing on-demand. Visit [www.grandtraverse.org](http://www.grandtraverse.org) and click on the “Meeting Videos” link for meeting viewing information, packet and agenda.


 **Farmland Protection Program** - Several years ago, the County Board set up the county-wide Farmland Protection Program. Acme Township participates in the County Farmland Protection Program. Acme intends to bring their first four projects to the County during the month of February. Acme Township has been working on these projects for the last 2 years, and they will be the first projects to be enacted under the County Farmland Protection Program. Acme Township has a millage that supports this activity, which is similar to the millage that Peninsula Township has had for many years.

 **Brownfield Redevelopment Authority** - The County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) projects continue to move forward. The BRA has talked over the last several months about the need to enhance the local participation in these projects. The County would like to see more leadership taken by the local community at the front end of the project to ensure that the project is welcomed and supported by the community. Local participation in projects has always been important, but there will be a renewed emphasis in local support before projects move forward. In the future when Brownfield projects come to the County, they will come with ample opportunity for the local community to have input into the design. This will hopefully streamline the final process and will include significant local support when the County Board considers the issues.

 **Human Resources Director and Labor Contracts** -Staff and I continue to interview Human Resources Director candidates. The County has been without a Human Resources Director since last September. Due to this, the Human Resources staff has increased their responsibilities picking up a good portion of the workload. I have been overseeing the operation of the department. We were unsuccessful in our first round of candidate interviews. We are in the middle of the second round of interviews at this point in time and are hopeful that we will successfully find a candidate over the next few weeks. We continue to negotiate labor contracts. We currently have two contracts settled. One contract has reached a tentative agreement and four contracts that expired last year are currently being negotiated. Three more contracts expired at the end of 2008, and we are in the process of initiating the negotiations on those contracts at this time.

 **New Resource Recovery Manager** - I would like to welcome Bob Osterhout as our Resource Recovery Manager. Bob started his position in the middle of January and is in the process of meeting with the community to obtain a better understanding of the community's desire for programs. Bob has a long history of working in the recycling arena, most recently with Recycle Ann Arbor. Bob also spent time with Ypsilanti Township where he worked on the implementation of a "Pay-As-You-Throw" program. Bob has a lot of technical experience in operations, will be paying close attention to the programs being run, and will be making suggestions on ways we can improve them and make them more efficient. Welcome, Bob. We look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with you at Grand Traverse County.

 **Board of Commissioner Meetings Live and On-Demand** - The County Board and committee meetings are available for viewing live and on-demand. Visit [www.grandtraverse.org](http://www.grandtraverse.org) and click on the "Meeting Videos" link for meeting viewing information, packets and agendas. In addition, meetings are broadcast live on Channel 99 and rebroadcast each week on Sunday starting at 1:00pm.

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