



Administrator's Update 2/8/10

County Administration
400 Boardman Avenue
Traverse City, MI 49684
(231) 922-4780
Fax (231) 922-4427

Email: daloia@grandtraverse.org


Third Floor Governmental Center Remodeling The remodeling of the 3rd floor of the Governmental Center continues to move forward. This project is being conducted in phases so that it will force as little disruption of services as possible. In the first phase, the 911/Central Dispatch area was expanded and completed. Central Dispatch has been moved to that area. The area is very nice and provides them with much more appropriate space and furniture for the important job they do. In addition to Dispatch, the south end of the building was renovated. This was the space previously occupied by Probate Court and the Juvenile Division. Upon completion, the departments in the north end of the third floor including Planning & Development, Brownfield, Finance, and Information Technology moved into the south end of the third floor, which allowed the north end to be renovated. That renovation is ongoing now and currently Finance and the Human Resources Department are in their permanent spaces. Soon, the Planning & Development Department will move into their permanent space and most of County Administration will move up to the third floor. Once the third floor renovation is completed, which is estimated to take approximately another 6 weeks, the contractor will move to the second floor and renovate the space previously occupied by Human Resources and the Administration Office and turn that into a large training room for City and County staff.

Labor Negotiations Labor negotiations continue to move forward. Jen Seman, our new Human Resources Director, has jumped in with both feet and is actively participating in all outstanding labor negotiations. At this time, there are only two labor contracts that remain open, pending ratification of other contracts by the Board in the month of February. Those negotiations continue and include the Teamsters General unit and Teamsters District Court. Of course, when those are completed, the County will begin negotiations the middle of this summer for contracts that expire at the end of this year. That will require the County Board to work with staff and look into the financial future of the County to make financial determinations on where compensation can be set.

MSU Extension There is significant change taking place in the Michigan State University Extension service offices. Michigan State Extension is being reorganized statewide. Jim Wiesing, our Cooperative Extension Director, is retiring in March. There will no longer be cooperative extension directors in the state. Rather, the state will have regional directors that will be responsible for seven or eight county areas. It is anticipated over the next year that funding from the state for operating cooperative extension programs will be significantly reduced. 2011 expenditures are expected to be reduced by at least 40%. This means priorities will have to be reset by the state in terms of services that cooperative extension provides. At this juncture, it is unknown what those priorities might be; although, four general categories of service delivery have been identified by the Governor.

Tax Tribunal The County Board has directed staff to meet with Garfield Township and others to discuss Michigan tax tribunal appeals. Under Michigan law, the responsibility for tax appeals falls on the local municipalities - townships or cities. In the case of townships, they have been held responsible to bear the cost of any appeals that take place. Most often, they stand to benefit the least by any increased assessments that are won at the tax tribunal. Often times, it does not appear to be cost-effective for them to fight these tax appeal challenges. County staff will meet with the townships to get ideas on what kind of impact this has on the townships and the County. In

addition, we will be looking for information on how the County might assist the townships in supporting these appeals. This is initial discussion to be reported back to the County Board of Commissioners.

 **Police School Liaison Program** It appears likely that TCAPS will eliminate the school liaison police program throughout their district. Historically, the County paid the full cost of this program. Approximately 5 years ago, the County asked the schools to contribute 50% of the cost of the program during the 9 months of school. The schools agreed and have done so since that time. Due to their significant financial dilemma with state funding, it appears that they will no longer be able to do that. While the program will continue through the end of this school year, it is not expected to continue into the 2010/2011 school year this fall. The County Sheriff's Department is reevaluating the situation and will be coming to the County Board in the near future to determine what action the County will take in terms of continuing this program. This does not affect the program in Kingsley schools at this time. Kingsley schools have agreed to continue the program.



Reuse this news. Pass it on.