



Administrator's Update 1/23/07

County Administration
400 Boardman Avenue
Traverse City, MI 49684
(231) 922-4780
Fax (231) 922-4427
Email: daloia@grandtraverse.org

✚ **New County Commissioners** On January 2, 2007 the new County Board took the oath of office. Joining incumbent Commissioners Larry Inman – District 2, Margaret Underwood -- District 3, Herb Lembcool – District 4, Wayne Schmidt – District 5, Richard Thomas -- District 6 and Sonny Wheelock – District 9 are our new Commissioners Bruce Hooper – District 1, Christine Maxbauer – District 7 and Larry Fleis – District 8. After the oath of office, the new Commissioners elected Sonny Wheelock as the Chairman for 2007-2008 and Herb Lemcool as the Vice-chairman. Committee assignments were made and the New Year was kicked off.

✚ **Sabin and Boardman Dam Maintenance** Recently the County signed a 2-year maintenance agreement with Traverse City Board of Light & Power for them to continue to do maintenance on the Sabin and Boardman Dams. The maintenance agreement capped the TC Board of Light & Power's cost at \$40,000 per year and stated that all costs would be split equally with Grand Traverse County up to that \$40,000 cap with the remainder to be paid by the County for anything over that amount. The County will begin to use the Department of Public Works staff with the help of TC Board of Light & Power to become aware of the maintenance and operational requirements of the dams. It is the intent of the County that the DPW staff will transition to take over the responsibility of the operation and maintenance of the dams over a period- of- time, anticipated to be much earlier than the maximum that is allowed under the agreement, of two years.

In a related matter, the Boardman River Dams committee will meet on January 23, 2007 at which time we anticipate receiving a report from Varnum Associates, a law firm out of Grand Rapids, that specializes in property ownership and riparian rights issues. Varnum Associates was hired by the Boardman River Dams committee to evaluate who owns the bottomlands under the pond above Boardman dam. Currently there are approximately 27 property owners whose properties will be affected under the terms of the consent decree, which requires the Boardman dam water level be dropped by approximately 17' by August 31, 2007 of this year. We are working with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Natural Resources to determine what will happen to the bottomlands and how environmental issues can be mitigated because of the draw down. At the same time, the ECT team has been hired by the Boardman River dam's implementation team and is beginning the feasibility study, which is expected to take approximately 18 months.

✚ **Twin Lakes** The County Board of Commissioners and the County Parks & Recreation Board recently approved a proposed plan to apply for grants and develop Twin Lakes Park to improve access for the physically and mentally challenged of our communities. The proposal includes improving the parking area and improving handicap access to Twin Lake to which we will include a gazebo, restrooms, a boardwalk, a handicap fishing pier, a beach area and handicap walking trails. The project is estimated to cost \$750,000 and grant funds are being sought to bring the project to reality. This project is designed in a way that will allow all people to use this park and will provide a much-needed recreational opportunity for those with special needs.

✚ **Community Corrections and Jail System** The County Board of Commissioners recently directed staff to work with the County judges and look at bringing back David Bennett, a nationally known criminal justice consultant to evaluate the current status of our Community Corrections and Jail systems. Mr. Bennett has an extensive background in this field, working internationally and looking at ways to more efficiently manage these populations. Approximately 5 years ago, Mr. Bennett completed a report to the County making a series of recommendations and suggestions for improving our system. He will be back to evaluate the successes we have had (which are many) and reevaluate new opportunities we may have to expand services and better manage this population. We believe that with the help of the courts and the law enforcement system we have made great strides in improving our ability to manage the population and are anxious to see what more can be done. As many of you know, the jail has expanded by approximately 45 beds this past year, and unfortunately, those beds were almost immediately filled. Our current capacity is approximately 191 and we have been very close to capacity at most times over the past six months. The County Board wants to make sure we have exhausted all possibilities before we look at the eventuality of the need to expand jail beds further. This review will give us an idea how far we have come, what, if anything, might be left to be done and what our jail population projections look like for the next 10 yrs.

✚ **Robert P. Griffin Hall of Justice** A meeting was held on Friday, January 19, 2007 with the contractor, the architect and the building authority to go over the final punch list of things that need to be completed at the Robert P. Griffin Hall of Justice. In addition, a discussion was held concerning some additional equipment and changes to the facility that might need to be made to accommodate the departments. We continue with the goal of having everything completed within the next few months.

✚ **Sewer and Water** The Sewer and Water committee along with the Board of Public Works, the County Board and the Townships that participate in our sewer and water system, will be undertaking an analysis of organizational options for running of the system. The current system can best be described as a series of inter local agreements between the communities and contractual agreements that set up what is turned out to be a very successful relationship. Due to the complexity of the system, however, sometimes our roles become mixed and confused. The Sewer and Water committee initiated a request to ask for a legal review of options available to run the system including the possibility of a Water and Sewer Authority, County ownership, Township ownership, or the present modified system, to name a few. The report is due back in approximately eight weeks. Meetings will be held with the County Board. Affected townships the Board of Public Works will discuss the options and evaluate whether the present system is the best system for us to use.