



Administrator's Update 5/23/08

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Roads This past Tuesday night, the Ways & Means Committee discussed and considered an appropriation and bonding to initiate road improvements in the roads in Grand Traverse County in the poorest condition. The County Board has asked the Road Commission to consider a joint appropriation of up to \$4 million to make improvements in the conditions of the roads. According to the PAZER Report prepared for the County Road Commission, it would take approximately \$129 million to bring all the county roads up to "good" standards. This is not significantly different from other counties in the State of Michigan. A presentation made to a joint meeting of the County Board and Road Commission Board 17 days ago indicated that fuel tax revenues, which are the main source of funding for road improvements, have not increased since the 1990's while costs of operations continue to grow. This past winter, the County Road Commission spent more than \$2 million in snow removal alone. The County Board awaits a decision from the Road Commission as to what level of participation is appropriate. The County has also decided to use a formula based on their contribution for County roads, per road mile, to make an appropriation to Traverse City and the Villages of Fife Lake and Kingsley who are all 3 responsible for their own road maintenance. This appropriation will be based on the same appropriation per road mile that they've made to the rest of the County and will require a local match in order to guarantee road improvements in those municipalities as well. This only addresses the very worst conditions in the county. The County Board is calling a meeting on Thursday, June 19 with the local municipalities to discuss a more long-term solution for improving the condition of roads in Grand Traverse County.

Historic Courthouse The historic courthouse renovation continues. A final punch list of items is currently in the works, and we anticipate that the contractor will be completed with their work on the facility in the next two weeks. Our staff will then prepare the rest of the facility including furnishings and wiring for computers and phones and make the facility ready for further occupancy. The actual move of the Friend of the Court offices and State Probation offices will not occur until our new document imaging system is up and running and has been utilized to image all the records of the Friend of the Court. This will eliminate the necessity to move a substantial amount of files back to the old courthouse. Once that is completed and the Friend of the Court is moved, the State Probation offices will be moved over to the new facility as well. That is anticipated to be completed by September or October of this year.


Segal Classification, Compensation, and Benefits Study This past Thursday, county employees and the County Board heard the recommendations from the Segal Group who was hired to evaluate and develop a new wage and benefits system for Grand Traverse County. Approximately 2 weeks prior to that hearing, County employees were given an


opportunity to review the recommendations report and ask questions. Questions were still being collected as of Monday, May 19. Segal is now evaluating those to verify the validity of the study. It is anticipated they will be making additional recommendations before finalizing their report. This study has evaluated the wage structure of the county, as well as, the benefit structure. This is an issue that requires collective bargaining, in most cases, and it is anticipated that this will not be implemented immediately, but over a period of time.

✚ **911** Recently, there has been some discussion in Leelanau County about evaluating the possibility of regionalizing the Central Dispatch 911 services. As I understand it, the talks at this point are preliminary and no actual discussions with surrounding counties have taken place; although, there has been some level of media coverage on the idea. We have received a letter from Leelanau County asking if we have any interest. Grand Traverse County's position is that we are always open and interested in discussing ways to regionalize services that will save money and will provide the same or improved level of services for our customers. Leelanau County currently receives less than 12,000 calls a year while Grand Traverse County receives 66,000 calls a year.


✚ **Video Web Streaming and Indexing** At the Ways & Means Committee meeting on Tuesday, May 20, the county staff presented a proposal to the County Board to consider the implementation of a county meeting web streaming system. This system will allow people to view county meetings live on the internet or to retrieve and view old meetings through an archive system of televised county meetings. The system is relatively new, especially to Northern Michigan. Envision a stream on your computer where a video sits on the left half of the screen and the agenda is on the right half of the screen. A citizen can scroll down to the agenda, pick an item on that agenda, and that item will immediately come up on the video for their review. The county is looking at this system in another effort to make county government open and transparent. Four companies submitted bids and those bids were evaluated by staff with a recommendation to go to the County Board at their May 28 meeting.

✚ **Strategic Planning** Now that the County Board has completed their 2009 Strategic Plan, which is available on the web site at www.grandtraverse.org, management staff is meeting with county departments to develop their individual 2009 strategic plans. Forms have been developed to formalize the strategic planning process to include a 3-year sliding scale, which will be revised annually. First, will be the prior year's goals and accomplishments. Secondly, the present year's goals and current status, and finally, next year's proposed goals. This information will be used by the County Board as they allocate resources during the budget process. The main benefit of this project is to give the departments an opportunity to strategically plan for their future needs. The departments' goals are tied directly to the County Board's strategic plan, which will help the County Board evaluate resource allocation in future years. Departments have done a great job of preparing their strategic plans for 2009. The Management Team has already met with 16 departments in an effort to assist them in their preparation of their plans for next year. Formalizing this process will help with accountability and give the County Board a better understanding of what our departments' needs are.

 **Countywide Meetings** As mentioned earlier, the County Board is going to reinstitute countywide meetings for all municipalities. A meeting is currently set for Thursday, June 19 at the Civic Center from 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. Watch for further information on the agenda. Some of the topics anticipated to be discussed are roads, the Septage Treatment Facility, and Solid Waste Authority.

 **Grand Traverse Citizen Newsletter** Grand Traverse County released the second edition of the Grand Traverse Citizen newsletter yesterday. The Grand Traverse Citizen provides information to the community regarding ways the County works for you. The newsletter is available online on the County's web site at www.grandtraverse.org. Limited hard copies will also be available at local municipalities and the Traverse Area District Library.

Effective and timely communication is vital for keeping the citizens of Grand Traverse County up-to-date on timely, targeted and relevant information. Future editions of the Grand Traverse Citizen will be available on a quarterly basis in Email newsletter format with limited hard copies available at local township offices and the Traverse Area District Library. The County wants to keep in touch with our citizens and email is another way we can expand on the continued growth of our long-term relationships. Not only is it cost-effective - email reduces paper mailing and document costs - but it is fast and easy to use. The Board of Commissioners have been looking for ways to improve community outreach and have made it one of their top goals for 2009.

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