



## Administrator's Update 11/03/08

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✚ **FOC and MDOC Moves** The move to the historic courthouse is now complete. Over the past three weeks, our Facilities Department, along with the help of the staff members of the departments moving, has moved Friend of the Court and the Michigan Department of Corrections back into the historic courthouse. The move went very smoothly and last minute touch ups are currently being done. Now that that part of the move is complete and part of the third floor of the Governmental Center has been vacated, we will begin to look at the reuse of that space with the County Board in November of this year. Thanks to all the staffs, especially the Facilities staff and IT staff, for making that transition so smooth.


✚ **Dams** The Boardman River Dams Committee continues to move toward completion of their 3-year project. The Boardman River Dams Committee is a public process that is all inclusive. That committee has been meeting for almost 3 years from its inception, and for the last 2 years, we've averaged between 50 to 100 people at each Boardman River Dams meeting held monthly. The Feasibility Study that was done by ECT Engineering and its team is almost complete. November and December will be the months that the Boardman River Dams Committee evaluates the Feasibility Study and also reviews the public input received from almost 20,000 questionnaires that were sent out for public input regarding what should happen to the dams in the future. Once the Boardman River Dams Committee completes its analysis and makes a recommendation to the County and the City, the project will be turned over to the County and the City for disposition. A number of alternatives are being considered including removal and modifications in a number of ways to the 4 dams up to and including repair of the dams and reinstatement of hydro-electric generation at the Boardman, Sabin, and Brown Bridge Dams. The meetings have been very dynamic, and as you might expect, there are a wide variety of opinions on the appropriate solution. Hopefully, this will be made easier by the work of this public process over the last 3 years.

✚ **2009 Budget** Last Wednesday night, the County Board of Commissioners adopted the 2009 budget. The budget totals approximately \$152,000,000 with a general fund of over \$38,000,000. The budget is primarily a maintenance budget. The recent downturn of trends in the economy forced the Board to pull back on a number of projects and take a prudently conservative approach to next year's finances. Included in this reduction was the delay in implementing the Segal Compensation and Benefits Study for County employees. While this was a very difficult decision, it was one the County Board felt necessary in light of this economic downturn. The Board is hopeful that this next year will bring improvement to the economy and make it more practical for implementation of the wage and benefits study.

✚ **Labor Negotiations** Labor negotiations continue. With the resignation of Brenda Hinds, I've taken over primary responsibility for the negotiations for 6 contracts with Dean Bott negotiating the Health Department contract on the employer's behalf. An additional 2 contracts expire at the end of this year, and negotiations on those contracts will begin in the very near future. As you might expect, there is a lot of disappointment related to the fact that the Board did not include money in the budget to implement the Segal Study compounding the difficulty of these negotiations. I want to

thank all the employees and the bargaining teams for their understanding of the situation and their continued willingness to work toward a solution to the bargaining.

 **Septage Treatment Plant** The Septage Treatment Plant financial analysis and business plan development is in its final stages. Staff met with the team of contractors this week to go over the final draft of the report. A number of changes and updates will be made to the report, and I anticipate the report will be presented to the County in November. The report details some short comings in the financial projections and will allow for a number of solutions to bring the plant to a cost even basis on a long term. The good news is in 2008 the plant actually made a little money and was able to pay back the \$438,000 for the short-term advance given to it by Grand Traverse County. Unfortunately, they had to borrow \$300,000 in order to continue with the appropriate cash flow. This means they roughly made \$130,000 this year. The bad news is a good portion of the revenue that came in was a result of special waste that we received in a contract from Bay Harbor. While that is expected to continue in 2009 and perhaps 2010, it will eventually go away. This contract brings in almost \$500,000 in revenue a year and we must work diligently to find replacement revenue for that eventual lost.

 **Jean Pennington** Finally, it is with great sadness that I announce the passing of Jean Pennington. Jean was a long time employee in the County Administration's Office and, upon her retirement, headed up the volunteer program for staffing the Information Desk of the County. Jean was as conscientious in her work as the head of the volunteers as she was as an employee for the County. Her commitment beyond her employment with Grand Traverse County was so evident and very much appreciated. We will all miss Jean very much. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers in the upcoming weeks.

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