





## Administrator's Update 10/26/07


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 **Boardman River Dam Feasibility Study** - The County continues to work on this project particularly as it relates to maintenance of the Boardman and Sabin Dams. The County has dropped the level of the Boardman Dam approximately 14-½ feet. This is physically the lowest point that the dams can be dropped. Our agreement with the state required us to draw the pond down 17 feet, but because the pond cannot be dropped any further, we are requesting that the state accept the draw down at the 14-½ foot level. The state has inspected the facilities and we hope to receive a letter from them in the very near future. As a result of some concerns expressed by visitors and property owners, we asked MMRMA, our insurance carrier, to visit the sites to look at precautions that we have in place to warn visitors of things such as steep banks, unstable soils, portable boat docks and occasional debris in the newly forming river. MMRMA came back with a series of recommendations that mirrored, for the most part, actions that we have already taken. They suggested changing some wording on signs to warn individuals on the property. The County Board has approved that new signage and we anticipate that the signage will be posted by the end of this week.


We are concerned about obtaining additional funding to complete the feasibility study. The feasibility study is estimated to cost in excess of 1 million dollars. To this point in time, we are still \$400,000 - \$500,000 short of the amount of money necessary to complete this study. The study is now being implemented with a series of grants and donations from local units. The study is being phased in with different components of the study being done to meet the grant requirements. A number of additional grants are in the process of being applied for, but we are quickly running out of money to keep the engineers moving this project forward. The project had a 24-month estimated completion date and we are concerned that if money isn't found quickly, the project may be suspended until additional funding is located. This is critical because we do not want to delay a decision on this. We have time restrictions we agreed to with the state and the Department of Environment Quality (DEQ) for us to make decisions on either fixing the dams or removing the dams. Any significant delays will not allow us to meet those timelines.

 **Capital Improvement Program** - The County, with the help of John Sych, County Planner, have initiated a planning process. A team has been selected to look at all County facilities to review County facility needs over the next 10-20 years and evaluate options to meet those needs. John has sent a survey to all County departments, which has been completed, and the information has been provided to the team members and to the County Board of Commissioners indicating what growth is expected over the


next 20 years. The committee is meeting and looking at facilities to make determinations on how we might put together a capital plan for future growth and development. This, along with the maintenance plan that we have in place to care for County facilities, should put us in a good position to address our facility needs over the next 20 years.


 **Grand Vision** - I hope you had an opportunity to attend the Grand Vision Scenario Planning Session Workshop that took place last Wednesday evening at the Park Place Hotel. Approximately 500 people attended the planning session, which is concentrating on planning out future land use and transportation needs for Grand Traverse County and hopefully the 5-county region. It was quite impressive to see participants from all facets of life in the area including business, government, planning, not-for-profits, environmental groups, and the public in general. This was the first of six strategic planning sessions that will take place with the goal of developing scenarios for the community to consider regarding what our community might look like 20-25 years down the road. The key to this effort will be citizen participation, and I am confident with upfront citizen participation, that this study that will not sit on the shelf. I believe that we will all be motivated to implement the results of this study as a result of the public input.

 **Solid Waste Plan** - The Solid Waste Planning Committee reconsidered the Solid Waste Plan Amendment after the County Board rejected the plan at their last months' Board meeting. The Solid Waste Planning Committee approved the changes recommended by the County Board, and I anticipate that they will give final consideration to the Plan Amendment at their County Board meeting on October 31<sup>st</sup>. Once that is completed, the Plan Amendment will be distributed to the local municipalities for their consideration. If 66% of the local municipalities approve the Plan Amendment, the Amendment will be in place.

 **Septage Treatment Plant** - As you may already know, the County Board has agreed to make a short-term advance of approximately \$400,000 to the operation of the Septage Treatment Plant. Bond payments can be made at the beginning of November. We believe this is a short-term problem that will be addressed by the County in partnership with the five townships who have guaranteed costs related to the operation of this plant. From a philosophical standpoint, it is important that the County maintain a partnership role with the local municipalities as this project moves forward. The Septage Treatment Plant, which has now been functioning at full capacity for the past 3 months, has processed more than 20 million gallons of waste over the last 2 years. In addition, this plant is complimentary to the City's Waste Water Treatment Plant, which together provide tertiary treatment of all waste for Grand Traverse County. The end product that passes through the Septage Treatment Plant and the Waste Water Treatment Plant that is deposited into the river and into the bay is cleaner than the original water of those two bodies of water. The five townships have guaranteed the operation of this plant for the benefit of the whole County including the other eight townships that did not financially participate. For this reason, the County feels a commitment to work with these owner townships to

make this project successful. The County is looking at the possibility of doing a complete business plan for the operation to address the revenue short falls that currently exist. I am confident that a combination of actions will rectify this situation, and they may include such things as bringing additional waste into the facility (in addition to septage and holding tank waste), better enforcement to ensure that the pumping that takes place in Grand Traverse County is staying in Grand Traverse County and is being delivered to the Grand Traverse County Septage Treatment Facility, and review of cost and expenses for operation of the plant. This is a state-of-the-art plant that is one of few in the nation that treats waste to this level and positions us well in the future for protecting the environment that we all care so much about.

 **TBAYS Soccer Field** - The County is working with the Road Commission as well as other agencies to develop a new permanent access to the TBAYS Soccer Fields off of Keystone Road across from the railroad tracks. Currently, access to this property is through property owned by Consumers Power, which is a private crossing. We are being told that a public crossing needs to be put into place. The new crossing that we are designing with the Road Commission will be a safer crossing and provide better access to this site. The TBAYS Soccer Field Complex, which is owned by Grand Traverse County, is our second busiest park behind the Civic Center, which provides recreation for thousands and thousands of local people as well as many thousands of visitors who come into the area for tournaments. It is a very important component of our parks system and we are working with the County Board now to secure funding and develop the entryway, which we anticipate beginning next spring.

 **Administration Staff** - Finally, I would like to introduce Katie Lowran to all of you. Katie is the new Office Manager in the County Administrator's Office and replaces Jean Derenzy who is now working full time as our Brownfield Redevelopment Coordinator. Katie comes with much experience in office management and will be a valuable asset not only to our office, but also to Grand Traverse County. Please take the opportunity when possible to introduce yourself to Katie. She is a wonderful addition to the County Administration operation.