



## Administrator's Update 9/19/08

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✚ **Historic Courthouse Renovations** Work on the historic courthouse contract with Hallmark Construction is now complete and final payment has been made. All that remains is some internal work by our Facilities Department, such as painting. Once painting is complete, we anticipate moving Friend of the Court back into the historic courthouse October 17, 18 and 19. State Probation Offices, which are located near the Commons, will be moved back into the building around October 28. The renovation has gone very well. Special thanks to Judge Rodgers, Judge Power, and Friend of the Court Director, Dawn Rogers, for their assistance on this project. An abundance of thanks goes to Danny Brown, our Facilities Director, who oversees all of these projects to ensure they run smoothly. If you have not had an opportunity to see the renovations, please do so; I think you will be impressed with the work that has been accomplished.


✚ **2009 Budget** Work continues on the 2009 County budget. The County Board has completed the majority of the public budget meetings during which discussions on budget issues with departments and hearing issues brought forth by the public were presented. The County Finance Director and I will now make the changes as directed by the County Board of Commissioners and prepare a new draft budget for the Board's consideration in October. There are still a few remaining outstanding issues including the Resource Recovery budget. This budget can be summarized as a maintenance budget utilizing more fund balance than the past two years to address the reduction in revenues as a result of the downturn in the economy. We will monitor this budget during 2009 and be prepared to make cuts in the budget late in 2009 or, at the latest, in 2010 if the economy does not improve and revenues don't increase.

✚ **Key Positions Open** The County has several key positions currently open that we are working diligently to fill. The Resource Recovery Manager position has now been authorized to be filled. Applications have been taken and we are in the review process of hiring a manager. This position has been vacant for nearly one year. The Emergency Management Director position was recently vacated and interviews have been conducted. A recommendation will be forthcoming to the County Board in October for hiring a new Emergency Management Director. Finally, our Human Resource Director, Brenda Hinds, has recently resigned and has left employment with the County this past Friday. Applications are being taken for that position until the end of today. We hope to have the position filled within the next two or three months. In the meantime, staff is doing a great job of filling in during the absence of those individuals. Work will continue as usual.

✚ **Metro and Rural Fire** The County Board of Commissioners has been working with the Metro and Rural Fire Boards to address two issues: the fee schedule for fire inspections and the Fire Prevention and Education Program. Changes in Rural and Metro Fire over this

past year have required that we reevaluate the Fire Prevention and Education Program and how it is conducted in Grand Traverse County. The County appropriates approximately \$88,000 per year for this purpose. In a recent meeting, it was indicated to the County Board that Metro Fire will now begin to provide this program on behalf of the local community taking over the responsibility from Rural Fire. Metro Fire is currently developing a work plan to demonstrate the activity that they will undertake in the coming year. As a result, the County will contract with Metro Fire to provide this service. In regards to the fee schedule, this past year, the County lost approximately \$50,000 by incorporating the fire inspection fees into the building code fees. We have been talking with the fire departments about this and are moving closer to an agreement that will allow the County to break even and charge actual costs for the Fire Inspection Program. It is important to remember that the Fire Inspection Program does not only include the initial inspections undertaken by the fire department when new building or construction takes place, but also includes re-inspections every few years to ensure the safety of the buildings that will be inhabited. The goal of these meetings is to reduce the County fees that were established in 2006 in order to collect fire inspection fees and allow the fire inspection fees to stand alone and be collected on a per project basis.

 **Conceptual Understanding Discussion** The County Board of Commissioners has reinitiated meetings with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians to discuss a Conceptual Understanding for how government activities such as payment in lieu of taxes, police and fire, and zoning will be handled on trust land with the Tribe. You may recall that recently 145 acres was put into trust by the Tribe adjacent to the Turtle Creek Casino. The parties agreed to work on a Conceptual Understanding that would identify general parameters on how the entities will work together to address the specific issues mentioned above once development takes place on trust land. We hope this understanding will be in place not only for current trust land, but also any future land put in trust by the Tribe. We are pleased to be working with Whitewater and Acme Township representatives in the development of this Conceptual Understanding.

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