

## **GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY 2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The County has had many challenges and many successes in 2006. Under the leadership of the County Board, County staff and departments have made significant progress. Following are some of the highlights of 2006 under the oversight of the County Board of Commissioners.

### **FINANCIAL**

National Certificate of Financial Reporting In 2006, our Finance Department staff completed certification for the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This award is significant for Grand Traverse County in that it exemplifies the highest standards in financial reporting and accountability available to a local unit of government.

Fund Balance This last year our fund balance increased by almost \$1,300,000. This is after reducing long-term advances in several funds including Information Technology. This brought our fund balance for the end of 2006 to \$7,589,620.84.

Long-Term Advances As mentioned above, the County Board of Commissioners continued their commitment to reduce long-term advances from the general fund to other funds. In 2006, the IT fund repaid the general fund \$274,000. This was in large part due to IT rates that recovered the full cost of operations for both IT and Telecommunications.

Revenue Sharing Replacement Fund The County Board of Commissioners directed staff to initiate a plan that would reserve money in the general fund for capital improvements over the next five years increasing that annual appropriation by \$250,000 a year until the \$1,500,000 in the fifth year equates to the amount of revenue sharing money that we are collecting. This will roughly coincide with the time that revenue sharing will end. If the state pledge to replace that money is not kept, we will be able to eliminate this appropriation, have over \$5,000,000 in a capital improvement fund, and not have to make further cuts in the County general fund as a result of this lost revenue.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

In 2006, the Grand Traverse County Board completed the negotiations on three labor contracts. This sets the stage for four labor contracts that have to be negotiated in 2007. In 2006, the County screened and hired Segal and Associates to complete the new wage and salary administration program for all County employees. That program is currently underway and is expected to be completed by this fall.

Martin Luther King Jr. Training Day The County expanded the programs available during training day for County employees. More selections were made available and more comprehensive training programs were included.

Additional Benefit Plans for County Employees In 2006, we provided additional flexible savings plans and additional deferred comp plans for County employees to provide them with more choices.

Health Risk Assessment Program 2006 saw the reinstatement of the Health Risk Assessment Program, which provides County employees with an incentive and a free risk assessment. In the past, we've found that this program helped cut down on Worker's Comp claims and medical claims.

## **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

Hall of Justice In 2006, the County Board of Commissioners dedicated the new Robert P. Griffin Hall of Justice. While final punch list items are still being completed, the building was occupied by District Court, Probate Court, Family Court, and Community Corrections in November of 2006, completing an almost \$8,000,000 project that was built without any additional tax dollars requested from Grand Traverse County taxpayers.

Jail Expansion A wing with 43 new beds was added to the County Jail in 2006. In addition, all security systems throughout the jail were upgraded, the complete jail was repainted, and the booking area was expanded.

5-Year Maintenance Plan We continued in the third year of our ongoing maintenance and replacement plan to bring all County buildings up to high maintenance standards at the County Board's direction, realizing that caring for buildings and facilities throughout their useful life extends that useful life significantly.

## **PARKS**

Twin Lakes Master Plan 2006 brought the completion of the master plan for the Twin Lakes facility. This plan was developed at the direction of the County Board of Commissioners to include significant public input in how we will plan for development of Twin Lakes Park. The results from the master plan started in 2006 with more work budgeted for 2007.

Enhanced Handicap Accessible Facilities at Twin Lakes Park As a spin off to this Twin Lakes Master Plan, a new plan was developed to undertake development of handicap accessible facilities at Twin Lakes Park, which would include swimming facilities, fishing piers, and handicap accessible trails and a gazebo. Fundraising began last year with grant applications submitted by the

County Board of Commissioners, and to this date, we have secured \$50,000 from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, \$65,000 from Grand Traverse County, and a state grant of \$357,000. This is part of a \$700,000 total project. Fundraising continues.

## **COMMISSION ON AGING**

Establishment of the Respite Care Program In 2006, the Commission on Aging utilized millage funding to formally establish the Respite Care Program that was operated prior to that time as a pilot program for the department. While the program is developing slowly, it provides a service to the County senior citizens.

Home Chore Garage Last year, we completed the building of the Home Chore garage for the Commission on Aging. This new garage houses all of our equipment and vehicles for the Home Chore Program and replaces a rental building that was inadequate for our needs.

## **HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Transfer of Emergency Management Responsibilities During 2006, the Emergency Management department was split off from the Central Dispatch agency and transferred under the responsibility of the County Health Department. Keith DeYoung was hired as the Emergency Management Director. The program is working quite successfully under the new arrangement.

Youth Health and Wellness Center 2006 saw the dedication and opening of the new Youth Health and Wellness Center developed at the TBAISD site. This clinic provides health care services for adolescents in a five-county area. The clinic was developed and paid for by donation of a building from Munson Hospital and a grant through the state. The facility is staffed by County Health employees.

Health Care Coalition The Health Care Coalition met its goal in 2006 by serving more than 1,000 clients who received basic health care services. This coalition, which works closely with the Community Health Clinic, is in part funded through a intergovernmental transfer whereby the County dedicates money to services for those in need and that money is matched by state and federal funds, which pass through Munson Hospital to the Community Coalition to provide service delivery.

## **BROWNFIELD AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Brownfield Redevelopment Grand Traverse County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority received grants totaling \$1,000,000 and \$1,000,000 in loans. In addition, the Brownfield Redevelopment program worked on eight projects.

Economic Development During 2006, Grand Traverse County Economic Development Corporation initiated two loans in the amount of \$470,000.

## **DAMS**

Transfer of Dam Responsibilities 2006 was a busy year for Grand Traverse County as the licensing under FERC was closed out by the end of the year and transfer of maintenance responsibilities was turned over to Grand Traverse County from the Board of Light and Power. In addition, an agreement was negotiated with the DEQ, which requires a draw down of the dam by August 31 of this year. The Grand Traverse County Board continues its commitment and participation with the Boardman River Dams Committee, which is a public process initiated by eight agencies and the Implementation Committee to eliminate the FERC licenses and do a feasibility study on whether or not the County and the City should consider removing the dams.

Consultant Hired Grand Traverse County Board and staff supports and continues to work with the Boardman River Dams Committee and, during 2006, interviewed, screened, and hired the team of ECT to undertake the dam feasibility study. The committee continues to seek out funding for this project, which is estimated to cost between \$1.2 and \$1.4 million.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Regional-wide Transportation Study Grand Traverse County initiated the Land Use and Transportation committee and continues to work to support the transportation endeavors of that group. 2006 saw the selection of a contractor team, which is lead by Mead and Hunt, and assisted in negotiating contract for work to be completed with MDOT and Federal Highway.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

In 2006 Grand Traverse County Information Technology department, on behalf of the County Board, lead the effort to transform our web page to a more user-friendly design, which provides better graphics, updated information, and ease of use. In addition, as part of this plan, several departments that had their own web sites are moving to participate in one county web page. All County departments are now under our web site – the last one being the DPW and the Septage Waste Facility, which recently made the decision to move to the County's web page as well.

## **EQUALIZATION**

2006 brought about the completion of the first year of work undertaking, by contract, East Bay assessing. In the first year of work in East Bay Township, 1,709 parcels were reviewed and the total increase in taxable value as a result of that was 8.45% or \$36,287,860.

## **RESOURCE RECOVERY**

The Solid Waste Plan was continued through 2006, and the plan was put into its final form at the end of the year. The plan has been initially reviewed by DEQ and is out to local units of government at this time.

## **COUNTY DRAIN**

In 2006, with the support of the County Board, the Drain Commissioner initiated the work to have all townships and municipalities adopt a drainage ordinance. As a result of an Attorney's General Opinion, it was determined that the County could no longer have a drainage ordinance and it must be adopted by the townships. The Drain Commissioner has been meeting with the townships, and at this point in time, seven local units have adopted the ordinance.

## **NEWSLETTER**

2006 saw the pilot for a County newsletter developed and distributed to all citizens of Grand Traverse County. The input received from that newsletter was very positive. The County Board currently has a committee in place that is looking at further development of a regular newsletter for the public.

## **COUNTY LAND BANK AUTHORITY**

2006 saw the establishment of a County Land Bank Authority for Grand Traverse County. This authority will allow lands to be acquired that are put on tax foreclosure that may be useful to local municipalities for development. It will also allow us to capture blighted areas and renovate them, so that they can be put back to a useful purpose. We are one of five counties in the state named as a land bank authority, and while we don't necessarily see an immediate use for this, we think the long-term existence of this authority will provide us more opportunities on how properties can be appropriately developed in the County.

## **VETERANS SERVICES**

Veterans Coalition Chuck Lerchen, our Director, on behalf of the Board, worked successfully with a number of local veterans organizations to develop a veterans coalition for the Grand Traverse County area. This coalition will work together to

ensure that veterans' needs are met and will work on special projects such as the county-wide effort to fund fireworks displays for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration.

Expansion of VA Clinic Services 2006 saw us successfully lobby for an increase in the number of employees at the Veterans Clinic on South Airport Road. Eight new health employees were added including the establishment of a new home health program to provide home health care for veterans.