

# 2010 Department Annual Reports

## Executive Summary

The mission of Sheboygan County is to provide courteous, responsive, efficient and effective services to those we serve. Our vision is to be recognized as a leader of responsive and cost-effective local government. To this end, annual goals and objectives were established for Departments and the County as a whole and actively pursued.

As the Chief Administrative Officer of Sheboygan County, the *County Administrator* supervises all non-elected Department Heads and coordinates and directs the administrative and management functions of all County Departments. The County Administrator's responsibilities include leading the annual budget development process; recommending organizational changes, new programs, ordinance and resolutions and implementing County Board decisions. The County Administrator has also become increasingly involved in economic development activities, and played a key role in the establishment of the Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation.

Due to ongoing State revenue reductions, increasing demands for services, escalating operational costs (particularly health insurance and fuel), and the increasing burden on local property tax payers, the County Administrator led a challenging budget process that included significant expenditure reductions in a number of departments, consolidation of the Land and Water Conservation Department with the Planning Department, and significantly reducing highway department staff. The County Board considered and chose not to implement a ½% county sales tax, and as a result, the County Board increased the property tax levy 2.5%, the first increase in four years.

The Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) was established early in the year and the County and its partners successfully leveraged financial support with the City of Sheboygan, other units of government and the private sector to help support the SCEDC operations. The County Administrator provided key leadership in facilitating the partnership as well as developing goals and objectives as a member of the SCEDC Board of Directors and Executive Committee. We are now poised to compete more effectively with surrounding counties and be more proactive, rather than reactive, in retaining and creating jobs.

The County Administrator was also very involved in the Sheboygan River/Harbor Superfund site clean-up efforts and helped raise local funds to leverage State and Federal resources in order to remove hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of contaminated soil. In total, more than \$50 million will ultimately be expended in order to clean up and restore the river/harbor and significantly improve the economic development opportunities and vitality of the area.

The sale of the Sunny Ridge North Building and grounds took place in June 2010, eliminating the ongoing costs associated with maintenance and utilities, and major renovations and improvements to the facility are currently in progress. This step now completes the county's

divestment of the property, and the final annual subsidy payment for the Sunny Ridge South Nursing Home facility will be made in 2012.

The trends in State funding and further restraints placed on local elected officials continue to be discouraging. As a result, the County's financial outlook going forward continues to be in jeopardy. Whether it is the courts, health and human services, maintaining our transportation infrastructure, or other essential programs, the State continues to not meet its commitments, and there is a growing funding disparity associated with implementing State mandated services. Though the County has been proactive in pursuing cost containment initiatives and has led by example, the savings do not equate to the shortfall in State funding. Expenditure reductions, diversifying our revenue, and continuing the trend of employees contributing more towards the cost of their health insurance and pension, will continue to be necessary. Despite these ongoing challenges, Sheboygan County has been recognized as a leader of providing responsive and cost-effective local government, and we have an excellent team in place.

The **County Airport Department** continues to improve its infrastructure and support services. The enhancement and implementation of long-range project planning allows the Airport to qualify for project funding aids under the Federal Aviation Trust Fund which offset 80%-97.5% of capital project costs. Since 1999, these efforts have produced 35 capital improvement projects totaling \$22.7 million. Of that total, \$17.2 million (75.7% of the total cost) was provided by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), \$4 million (17.8%) by the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics and \$1.5 million (6.5%) by Sheboygan County. With the completion of runway 13-31 to a length of 5,000 feet and bearing capacity of 72,000 pounds, and runway 3-21 to a length of 6,800 feet and bearing capacity of 100,000 pounds, both runways are now capable of handling transcontinental range jet aircraft. Sheboygan County continues to work with Morgan Aircraft to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is in place so they may move forward with their manufacturing facility in the future. The 1,094-acre airport grounds were well maintained for use 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with approximately 36,000 flight operations, a significant decrease (28%) over last year due to high fuel costs grounding many small aircraft. However, the large corporate jets and charters remain active. The Sheboygan County Memorial Airport is one of the finest airports in the state and remains the airport of destination for the world class events being hosted at Road America and Whistling Straights. It now ranks #7 out of Wisconsin's 16 largest general aviation corporate/transport category airports.

In addition to ongoing maintenance and custodial responsibilities for 489,000 square feet of space in six geographic areas of the county, the **Building Services** Department provided support or oversight on a number of projects including: continuing to lead the Energy Team, which through the implementation of energy-saving measures and increasing staff energy awareness, resulted in an 8.4% decrease in electrical use and a 10.7% decrease in natural gas use; adding entrance cameras to several buildings, installing fiber optic data cable; and replacing aging equipment in various county buildings.

The **Child Support** Department works to ensure adequate financial and medical support for families by locating parents and establishing and enforcing court-ordered child support collections. Their caseload has reached 5,300 and continues to grow. In 2010, the Department qualified in all four of the State performance standards categories to qualify for

100% performance based funding in the areas of paternity rate, arrears collection rate, court order rate, and current support collection.

The **Clerk of Courts** Office provides support to the five Circuit Courts, including jury notification, maintaining a record of all documents filed with the courts, and collecting the various fees, fines and forfeitures ordered by the court or specified by law. The Department processed 15,871 new cases, a decrease of 2,607 from 2009. During 2010, the department disposed of more than 16,700 cases, also a decline from last year. The five Circuit Court judges presided over 41 jury trials during the year consisting of 79 total trial days. The Department collected \$3.58 million in fines, surcharges and assessments, a \$244,000 decrease from 2009.

The **Coroner** is on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. In 2010, the Coroner investigated 508 deaths in Sheboygan County reportable under Wisconsin Statutes. Of the 508 death investigations, 450 (89%) were determined to be due to natural causes, 38 (7%) were accidental, 13 (3%) were suicide, 3 (1%) were homicides and 3 (1%) were undetermined. The coroner signed 407 cremation permits, a decrease of 17 from 2009.

The law firm of Hopp, Neumann, Humke LLP provides legal counsel to Sheboygan County, and Attorney Carl Buesing has been the lead **Corporation Counsel** from the firm since 2000. During 2010, he prepared numerous resolutions, ordinances and contracts as well as provided legal analysis and advice to the County Board, County Administrator and Department Heads.

The office of the **County Clerk** provides support to the County Board including maintaining the records for the Board and all of its Committees, certifying that meetings are posted in compliance with the Open Meeting Law and auditing the County Board expense sheets. The office administered four elections during 2010, as well as providing the ongoing service of processing Passport Applications and issuing marriage, domestic partnership, conservation, DNR vehicle, and dog licenses. Requests for marriage and conservation licenses declined during 2010. Following the completion of the 2010 census, the attention is now focused on the redistricting process which will take place in 2011.

The mission of the office of the **District Attorney** is to prosecute all crimes and non-criminal traffic and ordinance citations occurring within the County on behalf of the State of Wisconsin. The office also assists law enforcement in its investigations and prosecutes a variety of juvenile matters. The Department's caseload included 2,737 criminal cases: 1,428 misdemeanors, 584 criminal traffic and 725 felony charges. In addition, the office prosecuted 2,549 non-criminal cases: 1,536 non-criminal traffic and ordinance and 1,013 juvenile cases. Total cases prosecuted for the year were 5,286, a decrease of 1,150 from 2009. A total of 217 search warrants were issued during 2010, 94 of which were drug related, and 113 various types of electronic tracking/records warrants/subpoenas, almost all drug related, as well as two drug wire tap warrants. The Check Fraud Unit returned \$40,624.11 to victims, mostly area merchants.

The primary role of the **Family Court Commissioner** is to aid and expedite the Sheboygan County Circuit Court system. The Court Commissioner's Office manages a variety of work including conducting pre-trial paternity conferences or initial appearances, temporary and

stipulated divorce hearings, mediation referrals, referrals to Remember the Children Program, bail hearings, initial appearances in ordinance cases, and weddings.

The **Finance** Department strives to effectively and efficiently safeguard and account for the County's resources and to provide financial services in support of all County departments. Significant goals and objectives achieved in 2010 included successful completion of the 2011 budget process, continuing to maintain an agreement with the City of Sheboygan to share the services of the County Purchasing Agent, development of a 5-year Capital Plan, managing the County Revolving Loan Fund to support economic development, and oversight of the successful transition of payroll responsibilities to the Finance Department.

The **Health and Human Services** Department's mission is to improve the quality of life and self-sufficiency of Sheboygan County residents. The Department includes the Divisions of Community Programs and Elder Services, Economic Support, Public Health, and Social Services which collectively provide a broad array of services ranging from community based services for mental illness and developmentally disabled treatment, Senior Centers, hotel and restaurant inspection, drug abuse assessment and prenatal care to child protective services and job placements. In 2010, there was a 11% increase in the FoodShare caseload, 28% increase in Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program applications, and 6% increase in the Medicaid caseload. The Aging & Disability Resource Center averaged 760 requests for assistance each month, and there were 54,181 meals provided for persons over age 60. The department's crisis line processed 4,249 mental health crisis calls, an unprecedented 31% increase over 2009. The Health and Human Services Department provides critically important programs and services to thousands of people in our community.

The **Highway** Department maintains 451 miles of Sheboygan County Trunk Highways, 170 miles of State Trunk and Interstate Highways and 465 miles of local township roads, which equates to a total of 2,172 lane-miles of maintenance responsibility. Their mission is to provide safe and reliable transportation – Today and Tomorrow. Other major operations included gravel crushing, blacktop production, grading and construction, bridge maintenance and inspection, roadway marking and signing, and snow removal. The department also performs concrete work, pipe replacements, drainage improvements, engineering services, equipment repair, project consultation, road building and paving. During 2010, many highway improvements took place including the completion of the reconstruction of County Trunk Highway "O" from STH 32 to 68<sup>th</sup> Street and 13.75 miles of paving on our county highway system including overlays and construction projects. The Adell Highway Shed facility was vacated and consolidated with the Cascade and South Side Sheds, and was subsequently sold.

The mission of the **Human Resources** Department is to create an environment that promotes positive employee relations, encourages equal opportunity and provides quality customer service. The Department's responsibilities include labor relations, administering employee benefits and developing personnel policies and procedures. Health insurance premiums for 2010 increased by about 6.9%, the highest percentage increase experienced in five years yet remains below the average increases experienced by other Wisconsin counties. The County's Employee Strategic Benefits Planning Committee continued to meet regularly throughout the year to seek ways to improve the manner in which the County benefits are structured and administered. The InHealth Clinic, which opened in June of 2008, continues to provide basic health care for employees and dependents at a significantly lower cost than available in the

community. The clinic has met with strong acceptance and use by employees. The County is currently working toward bringing the City of Sheboygan in as partners in the Clinic.

The ***Information Systems*** Department mission is to support, guide and assist in the advancement of information technology for Sheboygan County. Every County Department is supported in some way by Information Systems either through the use of hardware, software, printing, courier or the mailroom process. The Department has continued to upgrade hardware and software to handle the demands based on state and county requests. The County website continues to be enhanced, making delivery of services and information available and more convenient for the public. The department's Help Desk provided maintenance and technical assistance as needed for hardware and software systems for more than 700+ requests from employees throughout the County.

The ***Planning & Conservation*** Department is committed to providing the public with information and knowledge on environmental issues that affect our community, and protecting and enhancing our County's natural resources and recreational facilities. In September 2010, the Planning & Resources Department and the Land & Water Conservation Department consolidated to become the Planning & Conservation Department. The consolidation allows greater collaboration on projects and resources as well as efficiencies in staffing, equipment and serving the public. The Department continues its coordination role in the federal Superfund hazardous waste cleanup efforts of the Sheboygan River. After 30 years of discussion, the dredging has begun and will likely be a two to three year effort resulting in removal of over 100,000 cubic yards of polluted material. The successful completion of this project will advance the aquatic habitat improvements needed to improve fisheries, recreation, and create opportunity for economic growth in the County. The dedication ceremony for the Marsh Tower, the State's tallest wooden observation tower, took place in May. The Department continues to administer the Federal Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program and has seen implementation of some of the construction projects that were awarded early in the project selection process. The most trying issue faced during the year was the controversy surrounding the fee-based system implemented to help pay for the maintenance of the recreational facilities the Department oversees. The Department processed 142 sanitary permits—a decrease of 9% over 2009—believed to be a result of the continued economic downturn, 83 shoreland permits, and reviewed 40 certified survey maps creating 79 new lots encompassing 843.38 acres. No new subdivision plats were approved in 2010, but several are in various stages of review.

The ***Register of Deeds*** Office is responsible for recording and providing a variety of legal documents to the public including birth, marriage and death certificates, real estate ownership, military records, probate instruments and business documents such as corporate filings. Recorded land records are the basis of the real estate property tax. The land records in the Register of Deeds office represent \$9 billion in real estate within Sheboygan County. The Department's revenue collections in 2010 exceeded \$1.4 million and the value of real estate conveyed in Sheboygan County during the year was \$226 million. In 2010, the office recorded 23,732 documents. The Register of Deeds office is the only County Department that does not require property tax levy to support its operations.

***Rocky Knoll Health Care Center*** offers a full range of services including short-term rehabilitation and out-patient therapy, traditional long-term care and specialized care for the

chronically mentally ill. The financial performance of the facility continues to improve due to ongoing implementation of sound business strategies which have been driving an operational and financial resurgence. During 2010, Rocky Knoll continued to reduce tax levy support. The 2011 adopted budget allowed for a \$1.3 million tax levy to support Rocky Knoll, which represents a 63% or \$2.2 million decrease over the levy approved to support Rocky Knoll in 2006 when it reached its highest point at \$3.5 million.

The ***Sheriff's Department*** responsibilities include keeping the peace, enforcing the law, administering the jail and providing bailiffs for the Circuit Courts. After serving two terms as Sheriff, Michael Helmke was defeated by Todd Priebe in the November election. The Department began the lengthy implementation process for the new computer aided dispatch records maintenance system (CAD/RMS) software, which will be completed in 2011. In the past year, the Sheriff's Department handled 33,499 total incidents, including issuing 9,684 traffic citations, and County dispatchers receiving 3,181 "911" calls. The Department also administers a correctional facility and continues to enhance its revenue by housing state prisoners.

The ***Treasurer's Office*** effectively distributed tax bills and collected property taxes while minimizing the amount of time people had to stand in lines. The Treasurer has a variety of tax payment options available to make payment of taxes more convenient. The County Treasurer's Office and City of Sheboygan Real Property Lister consolidated during 2010, providing taxpayers the savings associated with the reduction of one full-time employee. The office maintains the tax rolls in a central file for Sheboygan County. Tax rolls are open to the public and are consulted daily by representatives from real estate companies, title insurance companies, financial companies and the general public.

The ***UW-Extension*** Office's mission is to help the people the residents of Sheboygan County apply university research, knowledge, and resources to meet their educational needs wherever they live and work. The Department provides quality educational programming in four broad program areas: Agriculture and Natural Resources; Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development; 4-H Youth Development; and Family Living Education. During 2010, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Resource Management Guide for Sheboygan County Communities was completed to help communities proactively plan for the imminent arrival of EAB.

The mission of the ***Veterans Service*** Office is "Serving Those Who Served." The office provides access to local, state and federal benefit programs designed specifically for former members of the U.S. Armed Forces, their qualified survivors and dependents. The office's client base consists of approximately 10,000 veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, 1st Gulf War and our current military involvement in Operation Enduring/Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF), as well as those of the "Cold War" and peacetime service. The Veterans Service Office also counts in their client base qualified survivors and dependents of disabled and/or deceased veterans. In 2010, the office provided assistance to County veterans and their families and helped to bring over \$20 million in state and federal benefit dollars into the County.

**SHEBOYGAN COUNTY  
COUNTY BOARD**

