

WISCONSIN CENTRAL TIME

Marathon County Newsletter

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Restoring Bluegill Bay for Youth Fishing

By Brad Karger, Marathon County Administrator

When you were young did your Grandfather ever take you fishing? Did it matter to you if the catch of the day was only a three inch Bluegill or was it the experience of doing something fun with an important man in your life that mattered?

So many people remember and treasure that time with a person who is no longer a part of their life. The Rotary Club Wausau knows this and is committed to restoring our natural resources so that future generations can share the same positive, happy experiences.



Bluegill Bay Pond

The fishing pond at Bluegill Bay County Park is great for panfish in the spring and early summer, but once mid-summer rolls around the pond is full of excessive aquatic vegetation and severe algal blooms

caused by phosphorus from the adjacent Wisconsin River. In addition, there are elevated concentrations of heavy metals in the sediment of the pond. Yuck!

In celebration of its 100-year anniversary, the Rotary Club has decided to take on the Bluegill Bay County Park pond restoration as a community project. The objective is to restore the pond and the surrounding area to a condition that once again provides an enjoyable and productive fishing experience year-round and for many years to come.

An analysis of what it will take is currently underway by a consulting firm with experience in restoring ponds and

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Brad Karger

Restoring Bluegill Bay *continued*

By Brad Karger, Marathon County Administrator

lakes. This study is funded by a \$20,000 grant secured by the Rotary Club from the B. A. And Ester Greenheck Foundation. Their report and recommendations are due by February 1, 2015.

No one knows the cost of restoration yet. But what we do know is that the Rotary Club is committed to developing

a fundraising campaign for whatever is needed. Rotary is all about clean water and support of youth in our communities. This project combines both initiatives and will showcase the many contributions of Rotary to Wausau in their 100 years of service above self!



Bluegill Bay on May 3, 2014
Pictured: Brayden Myska (Brad Karger's Grandson)



Bluegill Bay on September 1, 2014

Keeping Our Community Safe

By Jane Graham-Jennings, Executive Director of The Women's Community

Marathon County is proud to support The Women's Community--both financially and through integrated public services. When the county is aware of an individual who is in a situation where they are in danger, they bring them to The Women's Community where they can get the help and support they need.

Most people recognize that domestic violence is a growing problem, but they may not be aware of the varied aspects of this pervasive problem. It not only affects the families directly experiencing the violence, it affects every aspect of the community including health, home, workforce, and wallet.

Victims of domestic violence have to factor in their economic survival when contemplating leaving a violent relationship. The choice victims face is living in violence or being homeless as a result of fleeing the violence. They may be able to find temporary housing or shelter, but they also have to consider the long-term economic consequences of leaving a violent relationship. A common tactic used in controlling abusive relationships is ensuring the victim's economic dependence relies on an abusive partner. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways such as:

- preventing them from having money of their own
- hiding money from them
- ensuring victims' inability to maintain employment by frequently disturbing them at work, often resulting in the victim's termination from employment.

Downturns in the economy only serve to exacerbate an already difficult situation, making it nearly impossible for many domestic violence victims to reach financial

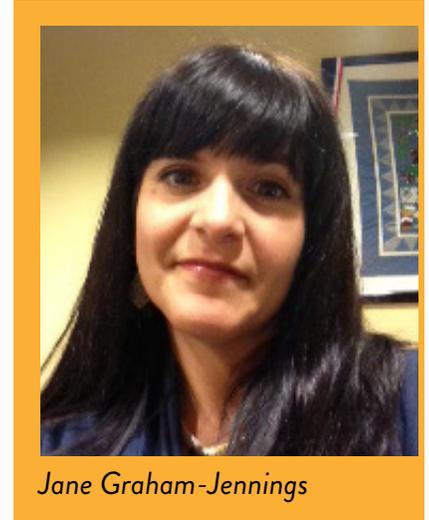
independence to free themselves and their children.

Victims also face higher costs for health care. Many victims find themselves unable to pay for the medical attention they need, so they

are again faced with a choice, living in violence and getting their health needs met, or leaving and being without insurance. If they are able to pay for immediate medical needs, they still incur costs that others do not. Even years after abuse has ended, health care costs for those with a history of intimate partner violence remain higher than those for those with no history of violence.

It is costly for the children that grow up in homes where there is violence. There are exhibitions of more aggressive and antisocial behaviors in addition to fearful and inhibited behaviors in children exposed to domestic violence when compared to non-exposed children. Children from violent homes have higher risks of alcohol/drug abuse and juvenile delinquency.

Not only do these personal costs exist for families living with violence, but the costs can be estimated in the millions for our community from health care costs, to law enforcement and criminal justice cost, to social service cost. The Women's Community alone served over 1,500 people in 2013.



Jane Graham-Jennings

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Keeping Our Community Safe *continued*

By Jane Graham-Jennings, Executive Director of The Women's Community

In serving these 1,500 people, we:

- had over 4,200 contacts to our 24-hour support line
- sheltered 80 women and 82 children for a total of 6,048 nights of shelter
- went to 88 households to provide follow up to victims after a domestic abuse arrest (through our Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) with Wausau PD and Everest Metro PD) met with 309 families at the Child Advocacy Center responded to the emergency department to support sexual assault victims 90 times

Every week our legal advocate attends initial appearances to offer support to victims who have been involved in domestic incidents - we average 10 domestic cases a week; some weeks we have as many as 20.

The Women's Community provides short and long-term support for victims of domestic violence. By supporting The Women's Community, you support helping keep families in the Marathon County community safe.

3 Ways to Help The Women's Community

1 Financial Support

There is always an opportunity to contribute financially. The Women's Community relies on community support and donations, we would not exist without both. We accept donations through the mail, or dropped off in person. People can also donate through our website (paypal) at www.womenscommunity.org

2 Product Donations

There is always a need for people to donate hygiene products. Full size bottles of shampoo and conditioner and lotions are helpful. Toilet paper and paper towels are always needed as well as cleaning products.

3 Volunteer

There are various volunteer opportunities depending on interest and amount of time a person wants to spend. Volunteers:

- talk with families in shelter
- are trained to respond to sexual assault victims in the emergency departments
- provide childcare while adults are in group or to provide some respite for moms in shelter
- help sort donations and keep the pantry organized
- do project specific tasks
- help organize and run fundraising events

Healthy Kids Have an Edge

By Karen Nerison, Contributing Writer

Just like everywhere in the United States, there is a growing concern about childhood obesity in our region. Marathon County is playing a role through their initiative Healthy Marathon County, which is a partnership of people committed to making our community a healthier place to live. Healthy Marathon County has action teams to address topics such as obesity.

In addition, several people and organizations are not only raising awareness for this concern but they are doing something about it.

When Peyton Medick started Peyton's Promise her main objective was to help feed the hungry. But with the childhood obesity rate increasing, Peyton also wanted to play a role in raising awareness for this growing concern.

According the Center for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years.
- The percentage of children aged 6–11 years in the United States who were obese increased from 7% in 1980 to nearly 18% in 2012.
- The percentage of adolescents aged 12–19 years who were obese increased from 5% to nearly 21% over the same period.

- In 2012, more than one-third of children and adolescents were overweight or obese.

Recently, the volunteers and advocates for Peyton's Promise have made a point to encourage healthier food donations so they can offer healthier choices to families in need. Canned fruit is a good donation choice or whole grain pasta instead of regular pasta, brown rice instead of white rice, whole grain cereals and other options that provide nutritional value.

Healthy eating is a positive decision to make, particularly for children. According to the Center for Disease Control:

Proper nutrition promotes the optimal growth and development of children.



Peyton's Promise Soup Can Workout

Healthy eating helps prevent high cholesterol and high blood pressure and helps reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes.

Healthy eating helps reduce one's risk for developing obesity, osteoporosis, iron deficiency, and dental caries (cavities).

Healthy eating is associated with reduced risk for many

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Healthy Kids Have an Edge *continued*

By Karen Nerison, Contributing Writer

diseases, including several of the leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes.

Healthy eating in childhood and adolescence is important for proper growth and development and can prevent health problems such as obesity, dental caries, iron deficiency, and osteoporosis.

Eating a healthy breakfast is associated with improved cognitive function (especially memory), reduced absenteeism and improved mood.

But, being healthy isn't just about what you eat. It also includes exercise to stay fit. "You just have to keep moving," says Peyton. Have you heard of the "Soup Can Workout"? This is a great way to accomplish two things at one time. The Soup Can Workout is a program where kids age 4-18 are asked to bring two cans of food to a workout program. They learn different exercises using the soup cans, and they also learn how to do a similar workout when they are home.

Peyton says, "We can't get kids to stop watching television, but we can give them exercises to do during the commercials. This is when the Commercial Sit comes in (aka the V-sit). During the Soup Can, Workout, kids are taught how to do the Commercial

sit, and they are encouraged to hold the sit during the entire commercial break. Some of the kids have to work on their endurance so they can hold the sit for that long, but they try, and they succeed."

When children eat meals with their family they typically consume better food than when, they eat alone or on-the-go. There is also evidence that shows that children who have family meals together are also less likely to engage in risk-taking behavior – as a result of the stronger relationships developed in the family through meal-time conversation and bonding.

Obesity is more challenging to measure in kids because they are still growing, and body composition varies at different ages and stages of development. We know that obese kids become obese adults and given that, [the statewide data/rates](#) are likely reflective of our kids in Marathon County.



When children eat meals with family, they eat healthier.

Marathon County, Peyton Medick and others are working on building a healthier community today and for our future. If you have questions, please contact Judy Burrows, Program Director, Chronic Disease Prevention, Marathon County Health Department. 715-261-1905 or judy.burrows@co.marathon.wi.us.

Signs of and Help for PTSD

By Scott Berger, Marathon County Veterans Service Officer

The Marathon County Veterans Service Offices serves as a liaison between the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) and local veterans. The mission of the Veterans Service Office is to assist all veterans and their dependents or survivors in applying for federal and state veterans benefits.

Post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, can occur after someone experiences, witnesses, or hears about a traumatic event such as:

- Combat Exposure
- Sexual/Physical Assault or Abuse
- Terrorist Attack
- Serious Accident
- Natural Disaster

Most people have some stress-related reactions after a traumatic event. If those reactions don't go away over time and they disrupt your life, you may have PTSD. Approximately 60% of men and 50% of women experience at least one traumatic event during their lifetime. Of those, about 8% of men and 20% of women will develop PTSD. The percentages are higher for those who experience combat and/or sexual assault.

If an individual continues to be upset and has symptoms for more than three months, they should seek help. If the symptoms are severe, seek help earlier. PTSD can usually be diagnosed in

one or two sessions with a mental health professional. Treatment can help you feel better. The two main types of treatments available for PTSD are psychotherapy (counseling) and medication.



Scott Berger

Veterans can seek PTSD treatment through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) while civilians can seek treatment from private mental health providers. The following links are provided by VA for additional information about where to get help for PTSD in the VA system and where to [find mental health treatment in your area](#) in the private sector.

If you are a veteran living in Marathon County and need information regarding PTSD, please contact your local Marathon County Veterans Service at 715-261-1141 for further assistance. Appointments are recommended. Office hours for appointments are Monday-Friday from 8:00am-4:30pm.

Information for this article was obtained from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for PTSD.

Normal Stress Reactions After a Traumatic Event

(can change your emotions and behavior)

- Fear or Anxiety
- Sadness or Depression
- Guilt and Shame
- Anger and Irritability
- Unusual Behavior Changes
- According to VA mental health professionals, there are four types of PTSD symptoms:
 - Reliving the event (also called re-experiencing)
 - Avoiding situations that remind you of the event
 - Negative changes in beliefs and feelings
 - Feeling keyed up (also called hyperarousal)

Marathon County Board - Structure. Focus. Effectiveness.

By Ken Day, County Board Member

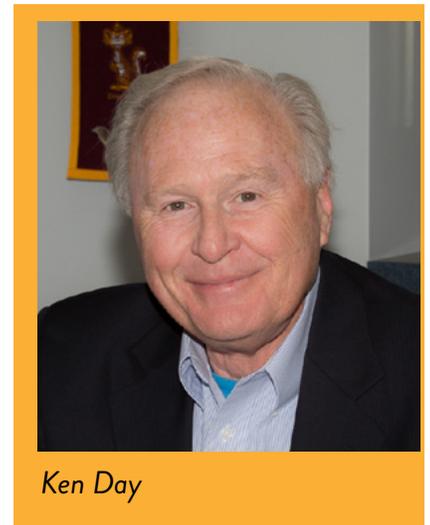
I am often asked if the Marathon County board is too large to function effectively. My response to this question is “the effectiveness with which a board governs is more dependent upon how the board is organized and the quality of its leadership, than the size of the board”.

The Marathon County Board has 38 members. If it's not the largest, it is one of the largest county boards in the United States. The value of a large board is that it provides a good cross-sectional representation of the public's views on issues. However, implementing effective governance with a large board is very challenging.

In April of 2009 and again in 2014, the Marathon County Board adopted revised county board rules which significantly changed and updated the county board's committee structure and leadership capacity. Historically the county had more than 50 committees and they were organized around specific county departments and programs. Each of these committees interacted with and reported directly to the 38 member county board. In 2009, revised county board rules created a pyramidal structure with fewer department and/or program specific committees. These committees were replaced by seven broad-based standing committees, each of which report directly to the county board. In addition, the executive committee composed of the chairs of the standing committees and the county board chair and vice chair was created to organize the county board's meeting agendas.

The program committees which remained after the reorganization, and other specific task forces reported to one of the seven broad-based standing committees. In 2014, a technology committee was added. Each of these

now eight standing committees are charged with formulating policy recommendations to be considered by the full county board. The county board accomplishes the majority of its policy formation work through the committees.



Ken Day

Every two years, a new county board is elected and seated in April. During the last two elections, more than 20 new individuals have been elected to serve as supervisors on the county board. The effectiveness and focus of any given county board is dependent upon the interests and perceptions of the individuals who are elected to serve. Current county board members were asked to complete a brief survey describing their greatest interest, challenge and satisfaction serving on the county board. Following is a summary of the responses of the county board members who completed the survey and the current topics of greatest interest for each of the eight county board standing committees.

Board members agreed that one of the most challenging aspects of being a county board supervisor is learning about and understanding all of the varied issues, services and programs in which county government is involved. At the same time, supervisors agreed that providing the leadership for resolution of issues, which results in developing outcomes that improve the lives of residents

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Marathon County Board - Structure. Focus. Effectiveness. *continued*

By Ken Day, County Board Member

of Marathon County is the most rewarding part of being a supervisor.

Board members agreed that finding the time necessary to understand all aspects of county issues and participate in meetings necessary to develop a resolution was a challenge. While board members felt uncomfortable voting on policy recommendations on issues about which they weren't well versed, members understand that through the standing committees, policy recommendations are thoroughly researched. Limited

county resources posed another challenge for most board members. The need for additional funding for programs and services seemed always to be greater than the resources available. Deciding upon which services are offered and which are eliminated posed an ongoing challenge. Finally, board members wanted to serve the residents of Marathon county by representing what they perceive to be the opinions, ideas and interests of their constituents. This was the most important reason they chose to run for an elected office.

Current Standing Committees

Based on issues of greatest interest for each of the standing committees

- **Public Safety**- Containing the growing availability and use of illegal drugs by county residents.
- **Health & Human Services** - Alternatives to incarceration for first offenders.
- **Infrastructure** - Maintenance of county highways which are being used by heavy farm vehicles.
- **Education /Economic Development** - Tax increment districts and their effectiveness in creating economic development.
- **Environmental Resources**- Retention of land in use for production agriculture.
- **Technology** - County wide access to the internet
- **Finance, Property and Facilities** - Adequate funding to maintain county facilities and equipment.
- **Human Resources** - Establishing policies, including compensation policies, that support a high quality workforce in a new post Act 10 environment.

Regional Interests

By Kurt Gibbs, Marathon County Board Chair

One question that I receive quite often is, “Why does Marathon County get involved in what appear to be local community issues?” To me the answer is clear, and I’m always happy to explain. Through Marathon County’s strategic and comprehensive planning process, the County aspires to be the healthiest, safest, and most prosperous county in the state. I will offer two examples to illustrate how what appear to be local community issues actually affect the interest of Marathon County as a whole.

The unique situation of the Village of Brokaw and the obstacles it had to overcome were a potential detraction from the county’s ability to achieve its goals. With the closure of the Wausau Paper Mill in 2012, the Village of Brokaw lost 34% of its tax base and the resulting revenue. There aren’t a lot of communities that can lose that much revenue and not have financial difficulties. Under state statutes, the Village of Brokaw does not have access to bankruptcy laws, so another solution had to be found.

One option is for the electorate of the village to vote to dissolve the village. If the Village of Brokaw dissolves, the land would revert back to the towns where the land came from, which are Maine and Texas. The residents of Maine and Texas would have to pay off the debt that was incurred by the Village of Brokaw. The financial ability of these towns to handle this additional debt is unknown, but it is also a matter of fairness.

An additional negative effect will be on the property values in these communities, resulting in a shift in property taxes to all owners throughout Marathon County. Dissolution could have a negative effect on Marathon County’s bond rating (A grade that indicates



Kurt Gibbs

credit quality) If the bond rating were to be downgraded, it would mean, increasing costs and an increase of property taxes for Marathon County residents.

Furthermore, there is also a tax increment finance district within Brokaw’s village limits, and there is no such provision in the state statutes for towns the size of Maine and Texas to have such a district. This is a regional problem, not just a Village of Brokaw problem. The economic impact to this part of Marathon County is far too great to ignore. This situation cries out for possible state intervention. However, the problem must be defined, and options explored. With all of this information, the Marathon County Board feels that a review by an independent third party is needed, and the county needs to be engaged. The consultant will assist in defining the problem and identifying opportunities to address the issues facing this region of Marathon County, clearly affect the entire county.

A second example of a “local” issue that affects the entire county is extraterritorial zoning (the legal ability

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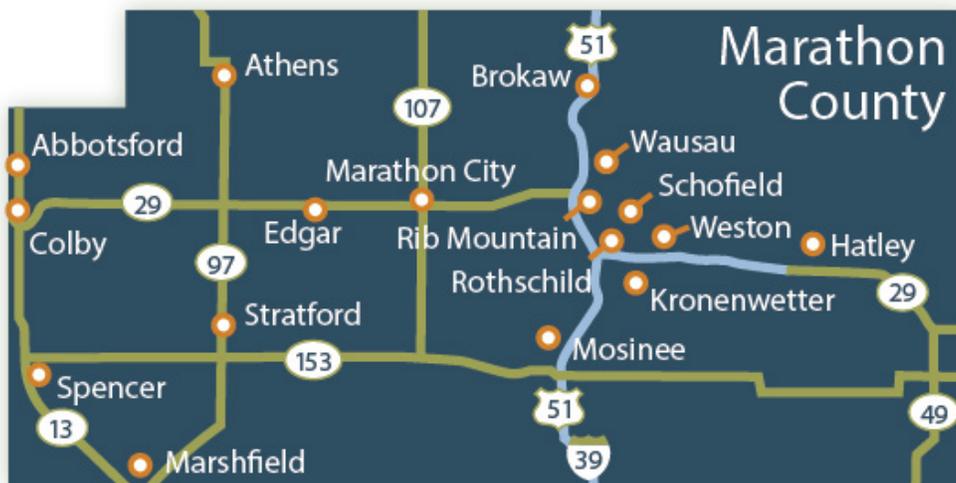
Regional Interests *continued*

By Kurt Gibbs, Marathon County Board Chair

of the government to exercise authority beyond its normal boundaries. To illustrate, in January of 2014, the Village of Marathon passed a resolution to exercise extraterritorial zoning rights affecting land in the four surrounding towns: Rib Falls, Stettin, Cassel, and Marathon. The affected communities responded with threats of termination of long-standing fire service contracts and boycotts of businesses in the village. The economic vitality in the entire region was in jeopardy. A 90-day pause was put into place with the intention of giving all affected municipalities a better understanding

of the county's role in extraterritorial zoning moving forward.

Because of the interconnectedness illustrated by these examples, Marathon County is committed to supporting a constructive dialogue between the communities to determine what is in the best interest of the citizens of the region. My hope is that we can address the concerns of the municipalities and explore the opportunities for this region to work together to create the healthiest, safest, and most prosperous county in the state.



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