



# Wisconsin Central Time NEWS

## A Marathon County quarterly eNewsletter

Volume 3, Issue 1  
(Winter 2016)

Learn what your County leaders & officials are doing to make Marathon County a great place to **work, play, and live.**

[www.co.marathon.wi.us](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us)

### University of WI–Marathon County: Visionary County Leadership



by **Keith Montgomery**, UWMC Dean  
& **Brad Karger**, County Administrator



In 1959, the University of Wisconsin–Marathon County (UWMC) was the first of its kind in Wisconsin: a college founded in partnership between two entities: Marathon County and the University of Wisconsin, bringing the advantages of a university education within better reach of our County’s residents. Unique in the nation and joined by 12 similar UW colleges through the 1960s, **UWMC stands today as a testament to the exemplary foresight of our County leaders at that time.**

The agreement made between Marathon County and the UW Board of Regents binds the County to maintain the buildings and the UW Regents to maintain “a University Center of the University of Wisconsin...and to provide adequate instructional and administrative staff.” The agreement remains in effect indefinitely unless “appropriations by the Legislature are insufficient to permit the continued operations of the University Center.” For its part, through 2013, Marathon County has an insured value of over \$61 million in the Wausau campus and provides \$485,000 in annual expenditures for debt service, small projects, and maintenance.

#### What does the County gain from having UWMC?

UWMC has a direct economic impact on our regional economy, attracting students from the Northwoods and beyond. On- and off-campus impacts amount to \$14 million annually in total income in the County. What’s more... **For every \$1 of state investment in UWMC, there is \$7.52 in economic activity in Marathon County.**

*(continues on p. 2)*

#### Editorial Board

Brad Karger  
Andrew Johnson  
Ken Day

#### We’d like to hear from you...

Please send your comments, questions, or article ideas to [administrator@co.marathon.wi.us](mailto:administrator@co.marathon.wi.us)

#### Inside this issue...

<a href="#"><u>UW–Marathon County: Visionary County Leadership</u></a>	1
<a href="#"><u>What Are Counties?</u></a>	4
<a href="#"><u>Marathon Cty Employees Share Inspirational “Workstories” Videos</u></a>	5
<a href="#"><u>Marathon County Residents Support a Local IRONMAN</u></a>	6
<a href="#"><u>(Uniform) County Addressing</u></a>	7
<a href="#"><u>Community Events</u></a>	8
<a href="#"><u>County Board Meeting Info, Board Member List, Subscription Info</u></a>	9

## UWMC: Visionary Leadership

(continued from p. 1)

Further, UWMC provides access to a UW education for students of all ages, abilities, and financial means, as no other UW institution does:

- 75% are Marathon County residents
- **60% of UWMC students are the first in their family to attend university**
- 45% of students come from the poorest 40% of households (UW System average is 36%)
- 16% of new freshmen are minorities
- 26% are older students returning for a degree, and 43% are part-time
- 66% receive financial aid

Alumni of UWMC who completed their bachelor's degrees are found throughout the County in many well-paying professional jobs, working as engineers, physicians, accountants, nurses, pharmacists, teachers, IT professionals, attorneys, and more.

### DID YOU KNOW...?

Bachelor's degrees in **business administration** and **engineering**, and a Master's degree in **physician assistant** are available right here in Marathon County through UWMC collaborations with UW–Stevens Point, UW–Platteville, and UW–Madison.

### UWMC Excellence Comes at Great Value to Students, Parents, and Taxpayers

UWMC maintains a tradition of excellence and sets up students for university success as no other institution does. Although UWMC accepts students from all high school quartiles, its TRIO support program for at-risk students retains over 90% of its students from fall to spring. In addition, **over 80% of UWMC students who transfer graduate with a bachelor's degree, compared to 74% for UW System graduates and 54% for Wisconsin Technical College System transfers.**

UWMC tuition and fees are \$5,120, a savings for residents of at least \$2,000 a year, compared with UW System four-year universities (and \$5,000 per year, in the case of UW–Madison)—and this doesn't include additional savings on things like room and board.

UWMC  
profiles in  
SUCCESS



Wausau East  
High School  
& UWMC Graduate  
**Alisa Pergolski**



## UWMC grad discovers special education niche

**Alisa Pergolski** always knew she wanted to be a teacher. However, it wasn't until she spent a half-day in a special education class at Lincoln Elementary School in Wausau, as part of a practicum experience while attending UW-Marathon County, that she discovered her love for children with special needs.

In a twist of fate, after completing her bachelor's degree in special education in December 2013 at UW–Stevens Point, Pergolski began teaching full-time last fall where she started: Lincoln Elementary school. With a caseload of 12 students, from kindergarten through Grade 5, she works with students one on one or in small groups to improve their reading, writing, math, life, and social skills.

(continues on p. 3)

(continued from p. 2)

## UWMC profiles in SUCCESS

A 2003 graduate of Athens High School, **Greg Ewan**—now an engineer at Greenheck Fan—completed his first two years of college at the University of Wisconsin–Marathon County before earning his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering in 2007 at UW–Platteville. He graduated top in his class of 167 engineering majors and attributes much of his success to the start he received at UWMC.

*“I loved being at the MC,” Ewan said. “If I could have replicated that experience for my whole college career, I would have. It was very family oriented and prepared me well for UW-Platteville. The professors were top notch. They had high expectations for you, especially the math professors. They taught us [math] principles rather than just having us memorize the rules.”*

**Athens High School & UWMC Graduate  
Greg Ewan**



## Deputy district attorney’s career shaped by UWMC experiences



**Marathon High School & UWMC graduate  
Theresa Wetzsteon**

A graduate of Marathon High School, **Theresa Wetzsteon** (then known as Theresa Wokatsch) began her college education at the University of Wisconsin–Marathon County. While she applied to and considered enrolling at several in- and out-of-state four-year universities, she settled on UWMC for several reasons...

*“I had heard about its reputation. That it was a very difficult school and that you’ll get a good education. Plus, it allowed me to live at home, save money, and help out on the family farm,” says Wetzsteon, whose parents were dairy farmers.*

Enrolling at UWMC also eased any anxieties she had about going to college: *“Being from a small high school, I had some fears or insecurities about attending college,”* explains Wetzsteon, who had 75 classmates in her entire high school graduating class. *“I asked myself: ‘Am I going to make it academically? Will I fit in?’ I found UWMC to be a great transition, allowing me to focus on academics without getting overwhelmed by having to also deal with a bigger city or a bigger campus.”*

**DC Everest High School & UWMC graduate  
Sheng Khang**

## Reflections from a non-traditional UWMC graduate

*“As a non-traditional student, who works and has a family, the University of Wisconsin–Marathon County appeals because of its location, affordability, and size. It is unique in that most of the departments, professors, and offices are in one building, so I don’t lose study time trying to locate them when I need assistance. In the classroom, instructors are responsive. Outside the classroom, they are available. The tutor lab offers drop-in assistance that works well with my busy schedule. I don’t have to set up an appointment like I would at a larger campus.*

*During my time at UWMC, I have also gained non-academic skills by getting involved in clubs and organizations. For example, I have developed leadership and interpersonal skills through the Business Club and the Student Ambassador Program. I am using those skills now in my most challenging position as the executive director of UWMC’s Multicultural Resource Center.”* ■





## What are COUNTIES?

by **Brad Karger**  
County Administrator



The answer to this simple question requires a complicated response. Counties are units of local government that also serve as administrative units of the State. Most decisions are made locally by the County Board, but many important decisions are made in Madison by State government.

**The annual budget of Marathon County is \$166 million dollars** of which \$59 million (36% of the total budget) comes from local property taxes (\$5.13 per thousand of assessed value) and local sales tax (0.5%). Intergovernmental grants and aid from state and federal governments fund another \$34 million (20% of the total budget), and the rest is a combination of licenses and permits, user fees, fines and penalties, etc.

Many of the decisions about which public services are offered are decided by State government in the form of mandates. **Local government leaders often complain about mandates being too restricting, but they are necessary to maintain consistency of services available.** Here are some examples of mandated services:

- Plow snow and maintain state highways and county roads.
- Operate the jail and provide law enforcement services through the Sheriff's office.
- Protect vulnerable adults and children and administer State and Federal assistance programs through the Social Services Department.
- Issue birth and death certificates and record property transfers through the Register of Deeds office.
- Issue marriage licenses and oversee elections through the County Clerk's office.
- Operate and support the circuit courts.
- Advocate on behalf of veterans for Federal and State benefits.

Examples of services that the County Board locally determined are provided to Marathon County residents are:

- Maintain and operate County parks, including Marathon Park in Wausau, Bluegill Bay Park in Rib Mountain, Dells of Eau Claire Park in Aniwa, Cherokee Park in Colby, and the new Eastbay Marathon County Sports Complex in Wausau.
- Operate 9-1-1 emergency dispatch center.
- Operate the County libraries.
- Help farmers with conservation efforts and help keep lakes and rivers clean.

Marathon County often partners with its neighbors to provide services to improve quality and lower costs. For example, Marathon and Portage Counties own and operate an airport through Central Wisconsin Airport; Marathon, Lincoln, and Langlade Counties provide mental health and substance abuse treatment through North Central Health Care; and Marathon, Langlade, Lincoln, and Wood Counties provide aging services through the Aging and Disabilities Resource Center of Central Wisconsin.

Even with all the State mandates, the County Board performs a key leadership role in setting the direction for County government. We have a large County Board, 38 members (listed on p. 8). Members are elected to two-year terms during spring non-partisan elections. **The County Board sets policy by passing resolutions and ordinances, which are the laws of the County.**

County Boards are different than a City Council in that they don't have the same home rule powers. For a County to provide a public service, general authority must be found in the Wisconsin Statutes. For example, a few years back, Marathon County was permitted to contribute financially to the animal shelter, but not a shelter for battered women. A city with home rule authority can do pretty much whatever the City Council decides, unless specifically restricted by law. By contrast, **a County must be authorized to provide a particular public service; otherwise it may not.**

Marathon County also has a County Administrator, me. I am responsible to the County Board for the execution of their policies and for directing day-to-day operations. Keeping my administrative role clear in relation to the role of the County Board can be difficult. So, I like to think that the County Board answers the "what" questions:

- What services?
- What populations?
- What cost?

And I answer the "how" questions:

- Contract for services or use County employees?
- How many employees?
- Job description/compensation?
- Timetable?
- Performance standards and efficiency measures?

County government is a wonderful thing. It has the power to change people's lives in so many important ways. Too often people don't even know we exist or take us for granted. **The bottom line is that Marathon County Government represents a \$166 million investment, and that investment works best when regular people take notice, communicate expectations, and demand an accounting.** Government functions best when supported by an informed and active citizenry. ■



**Got a question or comment about your County Government?**

I'd be happy discuss it with you.

**Brad Karger**, County Administrator

### CONTACT INFO

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**Mail:** Brad Karger

Marathon County Courthouse  
500 Forest St., Wausau, WI 54403

# Marathon County Employees Share Inspirational “Workstories” Videos



[Click here to view County Administrator Brad Karger’s Workstory video](#)

We have a lot of great people employed by Marathon County. People committed to public service as something more than a job. People who are respected and who respect others. These are employees who come to work each day with a positive attitude, who listen and communicate effectively, who are good team contributors, and who have compassion for the people they serve. People like this are the foundation of a strong workplace culture and a unit of government that produces results that residents value.

In August, Marathon County contracted with a business startup, U.S. Workstories, to produce a series of employee videos. Subsequently, a small group of employees (a few of which are showcased here) were selected to be featured

in the videos. The purpose of this investment is to:

- **RECRUIT new employees** who share our values and are committed to public service.
- **INSPIRE our current employees** to new levels of public service and engagement.
- **DISPEL old stereotypes** about public employees by showcasing for the community the talent we have in our County workforce.

At the December County Board meeting, the employee videos were officially released and the Board reacted with great pride in the quality of the County workforce and expressed high regard for the employees depicted.

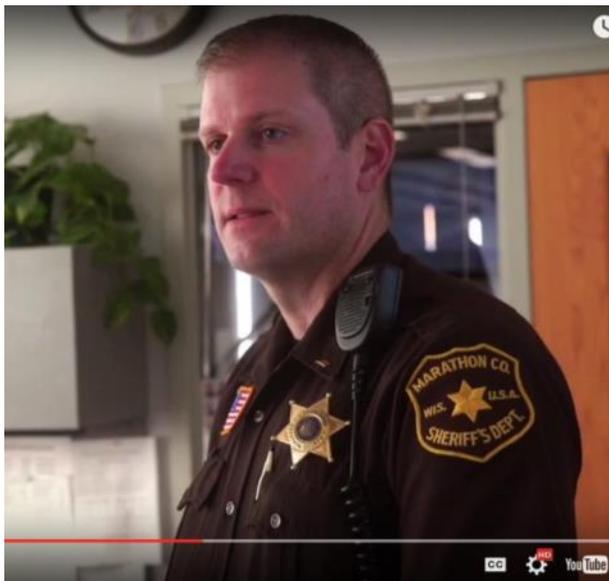
These videos will be featured individually on the homepage of the County’s website. We’ll notify everyone on the County’s email system when the featured employee video changes, so you don’t miss any. If you can’t wait to see them all, you can visit the U.S. Workstories website at <http://usworkstories.com/video-gallery> to view the entire collection.

We will also post the videos on County Facebook pages, including those for the Sheriff and the Public Library. Please “share” the posts so your friends can view the strong work culture and high standard of public service we have in Marathon County.

Also, take the time to watch all the videos (either as we post each one or at the [U.S. Workstories website](#)) and think about what you might say if you were featured. Next summer, we’ll be adding some new videos to our gallery, and that may be your opportunity to be recognized as an employee who delivers high-quality public service.



“Next summer, we’ll be adding some new videos to our gallery, and that may be your opportunity to be recognized as an employee who delivers high-quality public service.”



“We are serving the community and we are part of the community.”

—Lt. Ryan Weber  
Sherriff’s Lieutenant

Son of a career soldier, his duty to serve is personal. See how Lt. Weber advanced from patrol officer to detective to lieutenant under strong Marathon County leadership.

[Click here to watch Lt. Weber’s Workstory.](#)

*(continues on p. 6)*

(continued from p. 5)

## Sample Marathon County Employee Videos...



### EMPATHY & CARING

*"When you no longer have compassion for the people you serve, it's time to find a new job."*

—**MaiKou Yang**  
Economic Support Specialist

[Click here to view MaiKou's video](#)



### [Click here to see Mark's Workstory](#)

Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) employee uses farm-raised know-how to solve engineering problems here... and in the Middle East.

### PROBLEM-SOLVING

*"I always had a desire to serve."*

—**Mark Cihlar**  
CWA Maintenance Specialist

Visit the [U.S. Workstories video gallery](#) to view more Marathon County Workstories.

## Marathon County Residents Support a Local IRONMAN



by **Gina Cornell**

**Darrin Albrecht**, of Wausau, wanted to participate in an IRONMAN triathlon. Thanks to a local chapter of a national organization called myTEAM TRIUMPH, which helps physically challenged athletes compete in various events, Darrin applied and was accepted to participate in the 2015 IRONMAN competition in Madison, WI.

The IRONMAN is an iconic triathlon that has athletes begin with a 2.4-mile swim, then (without a break) push themselves on a 112-mile bike ride, immediately followed by running a full 26.2-mile marathon. It's an event that tests athletes both physically and mentally. *And Darrin was up for the challenge...*

The North Central Wisconsin chapter of MyTEAM TRIUMPH was formed by **Veronica Lyon** and **Heather Haupt**, who paired Darrin with three local "angels"—swimmer **Pat Vanderwerf** (Schofield), cyclist **Dave Lyon** (Rothschild), and runner **Kevin Cornell** (Rib Mountain)—whose job it would be to pull and push Darrin the 140.6 total miles around Madison—first in a rubber raft as they swam and then in his special race chair as they biked and ran.

These remarkable IRONMAN helpers trained all spring and summer with Darrin, swimming, biking, and running around Marathon County—laughing and telling stories as they went.

*(continues on p. 7)*



**Back Row (left to right):** Heather Haupt, Gina Cornell, Kaylee Capelle, Veronica Lyon

**Front Row (left to right):** Patrick Vanderwerf, IRONMAN Darrin Albrecht, Kevin Cornell

## EVERYDAY HEROES in Marathon County

## Local Ironman *(continued from p. 6)*

On September 13, the day of the IRONMAN arrived. As the sun rose over the beautiful city of Madison and sparkled on the water of Lake Monona, Darrin knew the feat that lay ahead, and he was ready to compete (along with 2,500 other IRONMAN challengers).

*The cannon went off—BANG!*

Instantly, Darrin was pulled in a rubber raft for 2.4 miles in Lake Monona by Pat Vanderwerf, who swam pulling Darrin behind him nearly as fast as some of the solo elite male racers swam that day. Next, Dave Lyon pulled Darrin behind him on his bike for 112 brutal, hilly miles. If you know the hills of Verona and the surrounding area, you know the Herculean task Dave had that day. To finish the triathlon, Kevin Cornell pushed Darrin around downtown Madison to complete a 26.2-mile marathon.

Throughout the entire day, Darrin waved and smiled, enjoying every mile. It was truly something to see. *And hear...*

I was a few blocks away, near the state Capitol, waiting to see them at the halfway point of the run. I could hear the crowds on State Street erupting in an explosive cheer. It got louder and louder, until I could make out what was causing the commotion. There came Kevin and Darrin down State Street, smiling and waving to the cheering spectators.

The incredible energy and support for Team Darrin was heartening. And the athleticism demonstrated by myTEAM TRIUMPH was inspiring.

Added to the 140.6-mile total distance of the IRONMAN is the time constraint: All three events had to be completed

in under 17 hours. The team had to make it to the finish line at Monona Terrace by midnight. And they did.

After over 15 hours of racing, Darrin and his angels appeared at the final finish chute with the Capitol fully lit as their backdrop. Again, the crowd went wild with applause and cheers.

Then, Darrin got out of his racing chair and, with the support of his angels, he ran with steely determination toward the finish line, where he was told:

**"Darrin Albrecht, YOU are an IRONMAAN!"**

Darrin showed everyone there that day that with desire and perseverance, anything is possible.

While Darrin was in Madison for the race, he got to visit the Capitol building. We joked that he probably wasn't going to get to see the Governor while he was there, but I asked Darrin if when he got home, he would like to come see the Marathon County Courthouse and meet our County Administrator and the County Board, which I told him is pretty cool, too. So, on December 15, the County Board got to meet Darrin and hear his amazing IRONMAN story.

Speaking of amazing... We have amazing residents here in Marathon County, who all pulled together to get Darrin to reach his finish line, and he, in turn, inspires us all by going after his dreams with such a positive, upbeat attitude.

It's important to realize how one small ripple can turn into a tidal wave when you get the residents of Marathon County to stand strong together toward a common goal—and, as Darrin would say, to "DREAM BIG." ■



Gina Cornell, County Administrator Brad Karger, Kaylee Capelle, Darrin Albrecht



### (Uniform) County Addressing

The Marathon County Board hasn't made a decision on County Addressing, but it has committed itself to thoroughly investigating the concept. **There is active opposition to the proposed change** due to the cost of implementation and the inconvenience to businesses and families.

One of the reasons the early conversations were difficult is that the problems/opportunities were not well defined. Much of the early focus was on a small number of duplicate addresses, and many people questioned whether all the expense and inconvenience of changing everyone's address was justified to correct a few duplicate addresses: **Why not just correct the duplicate addresses?**

As the County Board leaders continued their investigation, they learned that duplicate addresses are only a small part of the problem caused by the current ten (10) grid system. The bigger issue is **confusion experienced by public safety professionals, resulting in delayed—potentially lifesaving—responses.**

**Why NOW?**

Additionally, the County has two multimillion-dollar computer software investments planned for 2016, which involve addresses, so **if we are going to shift to a one (1) grid system, now is the time to do so to avoid massive updates within our software in the near future.**

The County Board may decide as early as their February meeting to move forward with uniform addressing. As always, County Board members are interested in hearing from the people who live in their district. **If you have an opinion on County addressing, NOW is the time to contact your County Board Representative to share your thoughts and preferences.** Not sure who that is? Click the link here for a [list of County Board Members by district](#) or call 715.261.1400. ■

**Why are they doing THAT ?!**



Register Now for Wednesday, February 10

## “Baby Business”

*The Dollars and Sense of Investing in Working Parents*

**Supported parents make productive employees.** Retaining skilled, productive workers is a continual challenge for employers. For working parents, the employment challenge is compounded by balancing work and family life, as well as ensuring a nurturing environment for their children, especially during the critical first years of a child's life.

**What can employers do** to partner with parent workers to retain quality employees, reduce absenteeism, and increase productivity? What can employers do to help ensure future generations of a skilled, educated workforce? Why does investing in working parents and early childhood development yield high rates of return?

### To register:

Visit <https://www.secure.unitedwaymc.org/babybusiness> or call United Way of Marathon County at 715-848-2927

How can a strong start for children lead to a healthier, more prosperous Marathon County?

### EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



**Keynote Speaker:**  
**Rob Grunewald,**  
 Economist, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

### Local Panel:

- Jim McIntyre, CEO of Greenheck
- Kelly Borchardt, Executive Director of Childcaring, Inc.
- Laura Hunt, young professional and parent

And view highlights of *The Raising of America*, a documentary that explores the challenges of balancing work, life, and family.

### Join us Wednesday, February 10:

**Who can benefit from this session:** Employers, human resource professionals, community leaders, and anyone who lives, works, or does business in Marathon County

**When:** 7:30-9:00am  
 Continental breakfast 7am

**Where:** UW Center for Civic Engagement  
 625 Stewart Avenue, Wausau

## "Making Ends Meet: Improving Opportunities for Economic Security"



Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2016

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Marathon County

Public Library, Wausau

The **Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS)** is hosting a community forum series. Ideas and comments generated during these forums will be shared with federal officials and policymakers through a nationwide effort by the [Kettering Foundation](#). Seating is limited to 18 participants for each forum. To register for the 2/9 forum, call Connie Nikolai at 715-261-6368 or email [connie.nikolai@uwc.edu](mailto:connie.nikolai@uwc.edu).

Event sponsor



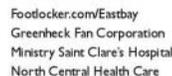
Partner



Sponsors



Early Childhood Business Champions



## 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Farm City Dinner

Thursday, March 10, 2016

6:00 p.m. Reception

7:00 p.m. Dinner

Jefferson Street Inn, Wausau



Sponsored by the Partnership for Progressive Agriculture (PPA).

During the event, a number of awards will be given for excellence in supporting agriculture in Marathon County. Together, the group will celebrate recent accomplishments and support the long-standing traditions of our agricultural community.

Tickets are \$25 per person or \$200 for a table of 8.

**Reservations are due by February 17, 2016.**

Questions and registration: 715-581-7778 or email [marathonppa@gmail.com](mailto:marathonppa@gmail.com)

## Interested in COUNTY ISSUES or SEEKING PUBLIC OFFICE?

We invite you to watch a County Board meeting. Meetings are open to the public and typically take place in the Assembly Room of the Courthouse. The Board meets twice a month, with the informational meeting on a Thursday evening and the voting meeting on a Tuesday afternoon.



**County Board meetings are video-recorded.** Meeting agendas, details, and video links can be found on the County's website: [www.co.marathon.wi.us](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us)



**Front Row:** Scott Corbett—Corporation Counsel, Nan Kottke—County Clerk, Kathy Kainz—Assistant County Clerk, John Small, Joel A. Lewis, Brad Karger—County Administrator, Kurt Kluck, Gary Wyman, Jim K. Schaefer, E.J. Stark, Sandi Cihlar

**Second Row:** Joanne Leonard, Allen F. Opall, Kurt Gibbs—County Board Chair, Mort McBain, Barbara Ermeling, Karen Kellbach, Lee Peek—County Board Vice-Chair, Jim Rosenberg

**Third Row:** David Nutting, Maynard Tremelling, John Bandow, Charles Soukup, Matthew Bootz, Arnold Schlei, Gary Beastro, Jean Maszk, Russell Michalski

**Fourth Row:** James Seefeldt, Alan Kraus, Richard Gumz, Jacob E. Langenhahn, Alan F. Christensen, Jeffrey L. Zriny, Craig McEwen, Bill Miller, Matthew Hildebrandt, John Durham, Richard W. Duerr

**Not Pictured:** John Robinson, Ken Day, Sherry Abitz

Stay "in the know" with...

### ***Wisconsin Central Time NEWS***

As part of our goal to be transparent and accountable to you—the taxpayer—this eNewsletter, ***Wisconsin Central Time NEWS***, is a means for Marathon County leadership to communicate what county officials are doing to make Marathon County a great place to **work, play, and live**.

Each quarter, we bring you insightful stories and timely information about the issues being discussed and the goals being achieved by Marathon County Government.

In addition, it's our hope share with you the network of dedicated people serving our community: Thoughtful, reflective, brave, and compassionate individuals motivated to improve the human condition. Public servants facing challenges as best they can. Real people stepping up to learn, grow, and work to make a difference right here in Marathon County.

**If you or anyone you know would like to receive this quarterly eNewsletter,** we invite you to [read past issues OR subscribe here](#).