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Wisconsin Central Time NEWS

A seasonal Marathon County eNewsletter

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

www.co.marathon.wi.us



By Lance Leonhard
Deputy County Administrator

How the Growing Drug Epidemic Impacts Children in Marathon County

The use of hard drugs in Marathon County is up, and it's a problem that impacts our entire community. But who pays the biggest price? Kids.

To address this concern, **the Marathon County Board approved a pair of resolutions in July adding two new employee positions to support children in need.** The first resolution added a Child Protection Social Worker position within the Department of Social Services; the second authorized the hiring of an additional attorney at the Marathon County Corporation Counsel's Office. Both new positions are funded with tax levy, which is already spoken for, making reallocation of resources necessary. The Board's vote on each resolution affirmed its ongoing commitment to ensuring the safety of the children of Marathon County.

Our County's team of 15 Child Protection Social Workers is tasked with a very difficult mission: investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect and working with families and resources in the community—including our many dedicated and skilled foster families—to keep kids safe. One essential partner in that work is Marathon County Corporation Counsel, whose attorneys provide legal consultation to social workers during their investigations and who prosecute **CH**ild **I**n need of **P**rotection and **S**ervices (CHIPS) cases in court.

Like many of our local departments, Social Services and Corporation Counsel have seen the impact of the dramatic increase in opioid (most often heroin) and methamphetamine use here in Marathon County. Quite often, parents struggling with addiction are either unable to safely care for and supervise their children, or they have been incarcerated

due to criminal charges connected with their addiction. Both situations leave children in our community in desperate need of caregivers.

The resulting effects of this drug epidemic on our local child welfare system are staggering:

- Individual caseloads for our social workers are **NEARLY DOUBLE** the recommended levels.
- The projected number of CHIPS cases in 2016 alone is **MORE THAN THREE TIMES** the average yearly total of CHIPS cases that went to court from 2004 to 2013.
- Our local child placement system is struggling to meet the rapidly increasing need for foster parents.

County employees know the profound impact that adverse childhood events (ACEs)—such as child abuse or neglect—can have on children and how important early intervention is for children's long-term health and well-being. This important vote by the Board recognized the need for Marathon County to continue to invest in our greatest community resource: our children.

But even with the creation of additional positions to better support these children's needs, our social workers continue to need other forms of support. Community members willing to serve as foster parents are essential to a successful child welfare system, but **our demand for foster placements far outpaces the number of people who can meet that need.** That's why I strongly encourage you to read and share the articles that follow, which describe how to become a foster parent and beautifully chronicle the Daino family—one of our many amazing local foster families.

The old adage is true... *It takes a village to raise a child.* Please consider how you can help children in need in Marathon County. ■

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The Daino Family

An Example of Foster Parenting at Its BEST



By Sara Klebenow

Social Worker / Foster Care Coordinator
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And Chad Dally

Library Specialist
Marathon County Public Library

Some people are lucky enough to discover their true calling in life at an early age. But Ray and Trish Daino say they didn't discover their most rewarding "job" until 2013—when they became foster parents.

Over the past 3 years, the Dainos have fostered 8 children and provided respite to several others. It's a job that never ends, but it's a role that Trish says they were destined to fill.

"Foster parenting has opened our family up to a whole new world... We have a new view on what it is to be needy, sad, empty, alone, scared, and hurting. But we also get to experience what it's like to be the people who fill those needs, wipe those tears, and watch amazing transformations happen in our own home, and in our own family life."

— Trish Daino
Marathon County foster parent

In addition to the 5 biological children they have, the Daino family recently welcomed into their home 5 more children—all siblings who initially were split into 3 separate homes when they were placed into foster care. The Dainos decided to foster all 5 children and reunite them under one roof. And, to keep the siblings together for the future, Ray and Tricia worked with the State to make the placement permanent through adoption, which was just finalized on August 9.



The Daino family, pictured on Aug. 9, after a ceremony finalizing the adoption of 5 foster children.

Everyday Heroes in Marathon County

For Ray and Trish, fostering children means stepping outside of their comfort zone and keeping an open mind when it comes to traditional definitions of parenthood. One request the Dainos rarely refuse? *"Eating mashed potatoes as often as possible,"* said Trish, *"because you just can't refuse a request for 'mashatatoes.'"*

Foster parenting requires complete commitment in putting the needs of the children first, because it entails long days and even longer nights. Appointments, doctor visits, therapy, school meetings, and visits with birth parents are just a few responsibilities that fill the Dainos' days.

Although Trish is usually able to form a bond quickly with the children in their care, Ray admitted that, as a man and a father, the familial connection with children isn't always instant for him. *"You really have to put yourself out there to make this work, and sometimes it takes me a little longer to form that bond. But you don't let the child see that,"* he said. *"You really need to, again, put yourself out there and be that father figure they need."*

Throughout their long days, the couple has found strength, happiness, and fulfillment both in their faith in God and in moments scattered throughout those long hours: *"Moments when you are surrounded by happy, laughing children. When you see, even if it's just a glimpse, who this child wants to be,"* Tricia said. *"When the [foster child's] walls come down and you get tackled for a bear hug. And all of those beautiful firsts that you get to be part of... road trips, birthday parties, friendships, Barbie dolls, clean sheets—Yes, we have actually had an exciting moment over clean sheets."*

It's those moments and milestones that the Dainos now use as benchmarks when they talk about success in their role as foster parents. *"Smiles and hugs, laughter, and silliness can be the most amazing signs of success,"* Tricia said.

The best success, however, comes when hope and sadness swirl and mingle together, when the Dainos have to say goodbye as their time with a foster child comes to an end, and that child's permanent placement with another loving family begins. The Dainos then take comfort in the knowledge that they did all they could to make life better for their foster children.

"There comes a point when you just know you are doing the best you can, and giving the most you can to your child," Tricia said. *"Even when it's super-hard, and completely exhausting, it's worth everything you give."* ■



Marathon County Foster Care

By Vicki Tylka

Director
Marathon County Dept. of Social Services



It can be difficult to think about, but every day, there are children who have to be removed from their family homes because of abuse, neglect, and abandonment. **Right now, there are more than 90 children in foster care in Marathon County.** The major reason for the growth in foster care in our county is drug use of parents and caregivers, resulting in home situations that are unsafe for children. Please take a moment to learn more about foster parenting in Marathon County.

Q. WHAT IS FOSTER CARE?

A. Foster care is 24-hour care provided by *licensed foster parents* for children who cannot live with their parents because it is unsafe, because they have special care or treatment needs, or because other circumstances exist that result in their parents or family being unable to care for them. Foster care is not adoption. Children are usually placed in foster care for short periods of time and do not typically become permanent members of the family. Whenever possible, they return to their birth parents.

Q. WHO ARE THE KIDS IN FOSTER CARE IN MARATHON COUNTY?

A. The children in Wisconsin's foster care system are between the ages of 0 and 18. Children in need of homes are not just babies or toddlers; they are teenagers, sibling groups, or children with special needs (such as mental health, behavioral, or emotional concerns). Some of them have been through some pretty tough experiences in their short lives and desperately need stability and attention. In Marathon County, you can also apply to become a *licensed treatment foster parent*, and you'll receive additional training and extensive social work support to provide care to children with high needs.

Q. IS IT HARD TO BECOME A FOSTER PARENT?

A. No, but it will take time. First, you need to contact Marathon County Department of Social Services (DSS) at 715.261.7618 or SocialServices@co.marathon.wi.us. You'll be asked to complete paperwork regarding you and your family, and then our licensing staff will need to get to know you better through a few interviews. You'll also be required to attend training, which provides you with an opportunity to network with other foster parents and get a realistic idea about what foster parenting is all about.

Q. WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

A. As a foster parent, you'll have a Marathon County DSS social worker available to you to offer support throughout your journey. You will receive monthly payments to help cover the costs of food, clothing, personal care, and any kind of special assistance a foster child may need. You may receive assistance with respite services or daycare costs, as well.

Q. WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A FOSTER PARENT?

- A.** If you become a licensed foster parent, some basic responsibilities include the following:
- Provide day-to-day care and supervision of a child.
 - Provide a nurturing environment, as well as limits.
 - Have the child participate in daily activities, as well as chores around the house.
 - Communicate with school and keep up on the child's progress.
 - Arrange and take the child to medical and dental appointments.
 - Encourage the child to engage in extracurricular activities that promote well-being.
 - Support a family interaction plan for the child and his or her birth family.
 - Have a routine family life.

Q. HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M READY TO BE A FOSTER PARENT?

A. It's not a decision you can—or should—make quickly. Take some time to assess your feelings. Also consider the responsibilities of a foster parent, as well as the goals of foster care.

Q. WHAT CAN I DO?

A. If you want to learn more about providing a loving foster home for a child in our community, **please contact Marathon County DSS at 715.261.7618 or SocialServices@co.marathon.wi.us.**

A child is waiting for YOU!

What's it like to be a Foster Parent?

Foster parents are *regular people* who care a lot about children. Here are a few things some of our foster parents have said they valued about the important work they do:

- "I like helping vulnerable children feel loved and nurtured."
- "An opportunity to give and receive love, even if only briefly."
- "I love the feeling that we make a difference in the lives of these kids."
- "It's rewarding, fulfilling...gives you a sense of accomplishment."
- "An adventure—an opportunity to make a difference."
- "Can be very stressful but also very gratifying."
- "I enjoy the hubbub."

Marathon County to Host Biggest Event Ever—Fall 2017 “International Wisconsin Ginseng Festival”



By Lisa Berry

Sales Director
Wausau/Central WI Convention & Visitors Bureau
*Proudly representing the communities of
Kronenwetter, Mosinee, Rib Mountain,
Rothschild, Schofield, Wausau, and Weston*



In September 2017, the International Wisconsin Ginseng Festival will celebrate Wausau and Central Wisconsin as “The Ginseng Capital of North America.”

Visitors and international travelers will descend upon Marathon County and the surrounding area by the THOUSANDS for the first-ever [International Wisconsin Ginseng Festival](#).

It’s the biggest event Marathon County has ever hosted, having tremendous economic implications for all of central Wisconsin. (*HINT: You might want to find lodging for interested friends and family now, as most area hotels are already booked up!*)

The festival will take place at various locations, including:

- The 400 Block and surrounding Downtown Wausau area
- Fromm Farm in Hamburg
- Rib Mountain State Park
- Monk Botanical Gardens
- UW–Marathon County
- The 45°N x 90°W Geographic Marker near Poniatowski
- ...plus many participating shops, museums, restaurants, bars, and other points of interest with specialty items like ginseng-related food, beverages, books, and more!

The ginseng festival will expand on the international visibility Wausau and Central Wisconsin are already receiving via local hotspots such as our world-class canoeing/kayaking course at [Wausau Whitewater Park](#) and the [Wausau Curling Center](#), with 8 Olympic-sized sheets of ice.

A COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The CVB is working with the Hmong American Center and a liaison from the Native American communities, as both cultures have had a significant influence on ginseng production both here and around the world.

There will be something for EVERYONE at the festival—agriculture, culinary arts, tours, education, music and entertainment, visual arts, history, and more.

We’ll have various ginseng dishes, Wisconsin cheese curds and brats, and traditional Hmong and Native American cuisine. There will also be a wide array of ginseng wine, beer, tea, and other beverages, as well as vendors with art and specialized items unique to this festival.

This large-scale event has already garnered the support of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism (resulting in an award of a \$39,440 Joint Effort Marketing Grant). Partnerships with numerous other entities, including the Wisconsin Department of Trade and Agriculture, are also in the works.

This is gonna be BIG!

LOCATION HAPPENINGS

In the heart of Wausau/Central Wisconsin on The 400 Block, visitors will be surrounded by live entertainment on our gorgeous band shell. Continuous entertainment will include bands of all varieties, Native American and Hmong traditional dancing and singing, and several smaller acts—ensuring an exciting festival atmosphere in Downtown Wausau at all times.

Additionally, a variety of tours, demonstrations, and other activities will be offered at several locations throughout the area, with shuttle buses transporting attendees to the many attractions. Festival attendees will receive maps, punch cards, and programs outlining the schedule of activities, encouraging them to explore all that’s offered over the course of the weekend event (see sidebar below or [the CVB website](#) or [Facebook page](#) for more details).

So be sure to save the date... We hope you come out to experience and support North America’s first-ever Ginseng Festival in September next year. ■

Ginseng Festival & Attractions: September 15–17, 2017

- Festival Poster Art Contest by the Center for the Visual Arts (pre-festival)
- “Festival Kick-off” Performance at the Grand Theater (the night prior)
- Ginseng Beer/Wine from local breweries/wineries
- Historical Reenactments and Tours at Fromm Farm in Hamburg, showcasing the history and beginnings of ginseng cultivation in Wisconsin
- Cooking-with-Ginseng Demonstrations at Monk Botanical Gardens in the outdoor catering kitchen and tours of wild ginseng grown in the gardens
- Guided Ginseng Field Tours & “Dig-Your-Own Root” experiences
- Tours atop Rib Mountain State Park, the location that inspired four Fromm brothers as they surveyed Marathon County from above and developed their plans to cultivate ginseng
- Comet Chairlift Rides at Granite Peak Ski Area exclusively for festival-goers to view the fall colors
- Botanical Exhibition on loan from the Heinz Museum in Pennsylvania at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum
- 5K Run between the Ginseng Board of Wisconsin and Ginseng & Herb Co-Op locations (with refreshments & entertainment)
- Fun Ride and entertainment at Harley-Davidson of Wausau in conjunction with the Tomahawk Fall Colors Ride
- Exhibit showcasing the evolution of ginseng in Marathon County at the Marathon County Historical Museum
- Interactive Ginseng Field Maze and Play (with Wausau Children’s Museum and the Marathon County Partnership for Progressive Agriculture)
- Seminars at UW–Marathon County featuring Dr. Mary Hausbeck, who contributed to a Mayo Clinic Cancer Center-led study proving ginseng was effective in reducing cancer-related fatigue
- Commemorative Coins given out at the 45°N x 90°W Geographic Marker near Poniatowski (the location of the 45th parallel; the exact point halfway between the Equator and the North Pole and halfway between the Greenwich Meridian and the International Dateline—a location of significance to ginseng cultivation)
- Event at Janke Book Store featuring the book *Bright With Silver*, which chronicles the rise of the U.S. ginseng industry through the story of the Fromm brothers
- Kayaking at downtown Wausau’s Whitewater Park through the Wausau Kayak & Canoe Corp. recreational release program
- River District business participation
- Live entertainment, food & drink vendors, plus SO MUCH MORE....

Good Government Needs YOU

What Marathon County Is Doing to Engage the Public



By Andrew Johnson

Environmental Resources Coordinator
Marathon County Conservation, Planning,
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And Deb Hager

Former Deputy County Administrator



The current political and economic climate makes the task of public engagement more challenging than ever...

Lingering effects of the economic downturn, government debt, and ongoing budget pressures at the national and state levels have all contributed to policy decisions that have decreased funding to local governments. What's more, political gridlock and polarization continue to take a toll on civility in the public sphere.

Citizens report feeling more disenchanted with, and disengaged from, the political process than ever before.

We are witnessing:

- **A general decline in citizen involvement in public life**
- **An abandonment of public service as an ideal**
- **Significant and persistent distrust of government**
- **Historic lows in confidence in elected leaders**
- **Increasing values conflicts among policy-makers and citizens**

But there is some good news...

Many ordinary citizens and communities want to reverse these trends. At the local level, people still believe they can make a difference. There is also a growing sentiment among local government organizations that engaging the public in constructive ways—including providing citizens opportunities to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes—leads to better long-term policy outcomes. In fact, some argue that **citizen engagement in LOCAL issues may be the most important means for reinvigorating healthy democratic practice** and restoring public confidence in government.

A CHANGE OF COURSE

In 2014, with the assistance of the University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS), the Marathon County Executive Committee initiated training and education on purposeful public engagement. The committee learned *when, why, and what* tools to use to engage the public.

As a result, **the objectives of the County's new public engagement initiative** are to:

- A. Expand communication with residents and provide educational opportunities to improve the public's understanding of the services provided and the issues confronting Marathon County government. (To that effect, see Sara Guild's article, "[Creating Good Government](#)" on p. 5 of this newsletter.)

- B. Support the growing culture among County administration and elected officials of the value of public engagement, including the importance of public input as part of governance
- C. Assist the County in developing a competency in public engagement, including an effective system of principles, knowledge, skills, tools, and processes
- D. Create/Adopt a rational and practical process whereby County leaders can make informed decisions about when and how to apply appropriate skills and tools to address different types of public issues in Marathon County

This tact is very different from those used in the past, when County government programs merely focused on the delivery of basic services as defined primarily by State and Federal mandates and incentivized programs.

In the next newsletter, we'd like to share examples of how the County's public engagement initiative has been used effectively to inform the community about our work and to further develop local public policy. ■

Need a Customized Map?

By Gary Hetzer

GIS Coordinator/LIO
Marathon County CPZ Dept.



Is your vehicle full of well-used, tattered maps? Or do you just use an app on your phone to navigate around the state and countryside?

If you like online maps, you've got to check out our popular [Marathon County Geographic Information System](#) (GIS), available for public use.

- Do you need a map of an **address**?
- Wondering about a **property boundary**?
- How about an **aerial view of your hunting land** or a **map of your favorite fishing lake**?
- Not sure of **your voting district**?

View and print maps for all of the items listed above—and more. There are also tools to **customize your own maps to meet your unique needs or interests.**

For assistance on using this new land information system for geographical data and related maps, contact the CPZ Department at 715.261.6000 or cpz@co.marathon.wi.us.

Creating Good Government

Learn About School Boards, County/Village/Town Boards, City Councils, & More at Chamber Series This Fall



By Sara Guild

Government Affairs &
Workforce Development Director
Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce
& County Board Supervisor, District #20



Fill in the blank: "*Local government is _____.*"
What words come to mind?

- *Intimidating?*
- *Confusing?*
- *Out of touch?*

If these words reflect the first thoughts that pop in your head, you're not alone...

You see, despite the fact that local government bodies like county boards, city councils, and school boards are the most *intimately connected* and *locally responsive* units of government, they remain the *least understood*. Wisconsin schools usually teach about state government in 4th grade and about federal government during high school, but they rarely teach much about the level of government that has arguably the greatest influence on our daily lives—local!

Our natural inclination is often to fear and avoid what we don't understand, which explains why most of us avoid actively engaging in local government. But it is this very lack of engagement that makes it difficult for local governments to do their jobs well, and often leads to citizens feeling unheard or unrepresented.

Local government officials need their residents to:

- **Read communications**
- **Attend meetings**
- **Inform themselves about community issues**
- **Provide relevant, constructive, and usable feedback**

They also need volunteers to serve on councils, committees, and commissions. These important actions are what can make real, lasting changes in our local communities.

In addition, people need to know that local governments have a considerable impact on a community's business and economic climate. They set guidelines for when and where new businesses can come to town, create regulations to ensure businesses are run in a safe and fair manner, and oversee many pieces of the taxing structures that can "make or break" a welcoming business environment. Jobs, communities, and even lives can be harmed if citizens are not well informed about the powerful impact local government decisions can have in the area of business.

That being said... Good government is good for business. **Engaged citizens create good governments.** And education decreases confusion and fear, which in turn increases engagement. This conclusion, reached by the Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce in 2013, sparked the development of a unique program series dedicated to increasing understanding of—and engagement with—our local governments.

The "Local Government Educate & Engage Series" ran twice in 2015 and will be returning in fall 2016, on Thursdays, September 29–November 3, from 5:30–7:30 PM.

The **six weekly evening sessions** are open to anyone aged 15 and older who would like to become more informed about local government processes. This updated program will cover the basic principles and operations of local governments, including school boards, county boards, city councils, and village/town boards.

Session topics covered will consist of:

- The process for running legal meetings (including Robert's Rules of Order)
- How policy governance works
- Strategic-planning best practices
- Financial basics (e.g., tax bills, TIFs/TIDs)
- Legal issues
- ...and more!

Attend them all, or sign up for individual sessions of interest to you. Local experts oversee each class, sharing their personal experiences with local government.

Past graduates of the program have achieved seats on the Wausau School Board, Kronenwetter Village Board, Hamburg Town Board, and Weston Personnel Committee. Other participants report gaining the knowledge and confidence needed to better understand how their local governments work and to provide useful feedback to their elected representatives.

We invite you to get educated and take the first steps toward changing your perceptions of what local government is—and what it can be.

Remember: *Local government is US!*

To register or to learn more about this program series, visit the Chamber's events page at www.wausauchamber.com or contact Sara Guild at squild@wausauchamber.com or 715.848.5940. ■





By Daniel G. Fiorenza

Operations Superintendent
Maintenance & Development
Wausau & Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry



The Pickleball Craze!

What started 52 years ago on Bainbridge Island, Washington?

If you guessed the current presidential race, you'd be wrong. But the start does involve a politician...



Members of the **Greater Wausau Area Pickleball Club** playing at 3M Park in Wausau

Pickleball began when Congressman Joel Pritchard and businessman Bill Bell returned home from playing golf one Saturday to find their families sitting around having nothing to do. With an old badminton court and an incomplete set of badminton equipment, they improvised and used table tennis paddles and a perforated plastic ball (that belonged to the family dog, Pickles). In a weekend, rules were created with the original purpose at the forefront: to provide a game that the whole family could play together.

Currently, the sport of Pickleball is exploding in popularity. The number of places to play has doubled since 2010. In fact, today—52 years after its very humble beginning—there are almost 4,000 locations on the [USA Pickleball Association's](#) (USAPA) "Places to Play" map.

What is Pickleball?

Pickleball is a paddle sport that's easy to learn and requires very little investment to get started. The game is played much like tennis—either as doubles or as singles, though doubles is the most common. Players use a paddle (the size of which is somewhere between a Ping-Pong paddle and a tennis racquet) to hit a plastic whiffle ball over a net in the middle of a court. There are painted boundary lines on the court, which cover a smaller area than a tennis court, making it **a sport that kids, teens, parents, and grandparents can all play together**. Pickleball stresses FUN; good sportsmanship; and a healthy, active lifestyle.

Who plays Pickleball?

Pickleball is unique because it's a game that crosses the generation gap. **Our local Pickleball club has people playing the game from age 14 to over 80 years young.** But regionally and nationally, play begins much younger. In fact, Pickleball is now often part of the grade-school physical education curriculum.

What kinds of facilities are needed to play?

A Pickleball court is 44' x 20'. The court is often "superimposed" on an existing tennis court. Technically, a Pickleball net is slightly lower on an official court, but Pickleball enthusiasts are all about fun and simply adapt to what's available.

Is there a local group that organizes Pickleball?

Yes! The [Greater Wausau Area Pickleball Club](#) (started in 2011), has seen its membership growth skyrocket in the last few years. The group has been playing at 3M Park for 4 years and has recently moved most play to Marathon Park, where they now play 5 days per week. Ralph Zagrzebski is the Pickleball Ambassador for North Central Wisconsin.

What has the Wausau & Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department done to meet the demand for Pickleball?

In 2013, Pickleball courts were lined on several existing tennis courts. 3M Park quickly became the most popular, mainly because a total of 4 courts were put on top of a space that had 2 tennis courts. Because of the demand and popularity of 3M courts, the County converted some of the basketball court area at Marathon Park to 3 dedicated Pickleball courts. **Through a budget request for 2017, the department hopes to be able to develop a total of 9 Pickleball courts at Marathon Park.** The [Greater Wausau Area Pickleball Club](#) has raised a total of \$18,000, which they hope to contribute to the courts in 2017.

What would 9 dedicated Pickleball Courts mean to Marathon County?

Of course, they would provide a healthy, positive sport that can be played by people of all ages and abilities. But the benefits don't stop there... **With 9 courts, the club would have the ability to host regional and state Pickleball tournaments.** These 2- to 3-day tournaments for Pickleball enthusiasts would have a significant economic impact for the Wausau area.

How can I find out more?

The local club welcomes new people all the time. The atmosphere is extremely friendly, and they're happy to teach you the rules and how to play your first time out. The club also has equipment for you to use as you begin this new and exciting sport. **For more information on how to start playing, contact the Pickleball Ambassador for North Central Wisconsin, Ralph Zagrzebski, at 715.581.3455 or visit their [Facebook page](#).** ■



By Lance Leonhard
Deputy County Administrator

Budgeting for Results Priority-Based Budgeting in Marathon County



As we embark yet again on the creation of our County budget, I wanted to take a moment to update each of you on Marathon County’s transition toward thinking about this process in a new, innovative way: Priority-Based Budgeting.

Many of you may have seen or heard the term “Priority-Based Budgeting” when reviewing County Board agendas or speaking with staff or department directors, but what does it really mean?

At its core, Priority-Based Budgeting calls for us to be comprehensive and strategic in our efforts to accomplish our mission to make Marathon County the healthiest, safest, and most prosperous county in the state.

It does so by empowering each of our departments to innovate, modify, and pursue programs that meet our result priorities, rather than simply building our “new” budget on the back of the “old” budget.

This forward-thinking approach was sanctioned by the County Board earlier this year, and Marathon County has been working to lay the groundwork for the program. Staff, department directors, and the County Board are identifying what it means for us **to be (1) the healthiest, (2) the safest, (3) the most prosperous, and (4) the best governed county in the state.** This information will be used to create “result maps” (see sidebar) that will guide us in evaluating our progress and will assist the County Board in making policy decisions. Our individual departments have been hard at work, generating a comprehensive list of all that we do, and departments are supplementing this “Program List” with specific program costs.

For the next step in the process, we will turn to many of you to take an honest, in-depth look at how our individual programs work to move us toward accomplishing our mission. This process, referred to as “Program Scoring,” will provide departments with meaningful, insightful information, allowing them to be on the leading edge of change and empowering them with information to allocate resources to those programs that meaningfully move us toward our goals—that is, *our priorities.*

At its most basic, Priority-Based Budgeting gets us to think about our programs as investments, rather than simply as costs. We want to invest our resources in programs that meet our goals, as opposed to simply continuing to fund programs that we have funded in the past.

In addition to empowering individual departments, **our Priority-Based Budgeting initiative is also going to complement another important project Marathon County is seeking to reinvigorate and reshape: our LEAN initiative.**

As many of you know, LEAN is aimed at process improvement, trying to accomplish what we do as efficiently as possible. In some organizations, these initiatives are driven by facilitators who examine processes and provide recommendations for improvement. Marathon County’s approach is driven by the skills and talents of our employees. Our employees are our greatest asset, and we want to invest heavily in them. To that end, we want to revitalize our initiative by training our employees on the principles of process improvement: identifying areas for improvement, analyzing existing processes, and innovating solutions.

These are exciting times in Marathon County! All levels of our organization are committed to innovation and improvement, and our movement toward Priority-Based Budgeting and our focus on process improvement are central to that commitment. ■





By Jim Warsaw
Executive Director
MCDEVCO

Marathon County's Workforce Needs



Having weathered the most challenging economic conditions since the Great Depression, many business owners in Marathon County are now reporting that general business conditions are slowly improving. Some even report they are seeing tremendous opportunities for growth.

The two biggest challenges facing Marathon County businesses today are:

- The limited pool of qualified individuals available to fill open positions
- Concerns over being able to fill the gaps that will be created by the number of retirees expected over the next 3 to 5 years

According to the North Central Workforce Development Board, a recent survey of 29 metal manufacturers in Marathon County indicates that over 600 manufacturing positions remain unfilled in Marathon County alone. The same companies are projecting a demand of nearly 1,600 workers over the next 3 years due to retirement and growth.

The healthcare industry is projecting a need of over 2,500 healthcare professionals over the next 3 years. The information technology sector is reporting a need of over 1,000 IT professionals over the same period. Adding to the challenge is the limited number (22) of certified IT instructors available in the 9-county area of northcentral Wisconsin. This includes instructors within the UW system, the technical schools, and our K-12 systems. The Wisconsin Automotive and Transportation Education Association (WATEA) has been challenged in filling positions for diesel technicians and CDL drivers. They have worked closely with NTC in developing a CDL Drivers School to promote the needs in their sector.

So, you may be asking yourselves:

What's being done to address these workforce issues?



Many people throughout Marathon County and contiguous counties are actively collaborating on workforce development projects. **One such initiative is called the "Workforce Hub."** It's a group of concerned individuals and representatives from our local businesses (large and small); educators from our local K-12 school districts, tech schools, and universities; healthcare providers; IT professionals and service providers; and transportation and ag businesses.

Five years ago, **Marathon County Development Corporation (MCDEVCO) initiated the "Heavy Metal Tour" in an attempt to expose junior high and high school students to careers available with local companies servicing the metal fabrication industry.** It started out small, with only 3 busloads of students, but has grown tremendously. Last year, over 3,800 students participated by touring 56 businesses in northcentral Wisconsin. We expect this year's event to be even bigger. In fact...

We're looking for 7-10 more Marathon County businesses to participate in our Heavy Metal Tour program on October 5, 2016.

During the tours, students learn the wages they can earn with their high school degree and what additional amounts they might make if they achieve a certification from one of our technical schools. Students on the Heavy Metal Tour are also informed of the many opportunities in our community for paid internships, apprenticeships, and tuition reimbursement for continuing education that are available—and extremely attractive—to those interested in entering these fields.

Marathon County's many opportunities for its citizens (both those just starting out in the workforce and those further along in their career path) to obtain and build sustaining careers is central to its mission of being a preferred place to live, work, play, and do business.

MCDEVCO recently hired an independent contractor to work as its Community Engagement Specialist to assist with workforce issues. It's MCDEVCO's hope that through this position and such workforce development initiatives as our Workforce Hub and our Heavy Metal Tour, we can help bring more of Marathon County's diverse job opportunities to light. ■

Children's Museum Can't Be Housed at Marathon County Public Library



By Chad Dally

Library Specialist
Marathon County Public Library



The Marathon County Public Library (MCPL) recently determined that an effort to host the Children's Museum of Marathon County (CMMC) on its third floor won't come to fruition.

Although the third floor is structurally sound to support a community room and space for our Friends of the Library, **an engineering report revealed that major structural augmentation throughout the building would be needed to accommodate a children's museum.** The cost to complete that work would simply be too high to make the co-location of the library and the museum a reality.

This finding is most unfortunate, as the partnership between the library and CMMC was full of great potential for providing hands-on STEM- (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) focused and educational experiences throughout our county. Although we will not share the same roof, we share the desire to bring a new level of interactive and fun learning to our community. The CMMC will do that regardless of where their permanent space is located, and we'll continue to work with them on cooperative ways for our organizations to bring a STEM focus to Marathon County's youth.

We applaud the efforts of the Children's Museum of Marathon County, and we look forward to a productive partnership with them in the future. **The CMMC Board of Directors remains optimistic that they will secure a location, and they remain committed to opening the much sought-after children's museum to serve our community.** For further details and updates, please visit the Children's Museum of Marathon County at www.ChildrensMuseumMarathonCounty.org. ■

MCPL Homebound Program Brings the Library to YOU!



Within the walls of the 9 public libraries in Marathon County sit hundreds of thousands of books, CDs, audiobooks, DVDs, and more. But, for a variety of reasons, not all of the County's community members are able to venture inside one of them.

For those who are unable to visit the library due to age, illness, or an accident or disability, don't worry—The library makes house calls to homebound residents!

That's right... Through our longstanding [MCPL Homebound Program](#), you can receive books, music, movies, or other materials either by mail or through special delivery to your home by one of our dedicated volunteers.

There is no cost to enroll in the program; only a valid library card is required.

Not even a doctor's note is needed—The only criteria is the inability (even temporarily) to get library materials any other way.

The library currently has about 350 patrons enrolled in this service, but we're always accepting new enrollees who want to access all of the information and entertainment we have in our library system. Once enrolled, staff and volunteers will select items for you based on preferences we're given (though we also take requests for specific items, too.) Materials can be kept at home for up to 5 weeks, after which they must be sent back via mail or picked up by one of our couriers.

The library's standard limits on each type of materials that can be checked out apply:

- An unlimited number of books, audiobooks, and magazine back issues
- Up to 6 DVDs checked out at a time
- Up to 25 CDs at a time

In addition, MCPL is the local contact for services through the [Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library](#). We'd be happy to help patrons connect with those resources as well.

If you or someone you know would like to enroll in the library's Homebound program—or would like more information on this FREE community service—please give us a call at 715.261.7248 or send an email to homebound@mcpl.us. ■



Historic photo of Marathon County Public Library volunteers delivering books to homebound residents at Mount View Nursing Home

Hmong/Lao Vietnam War Veterans Memorial Rescheduled to Sept. 24



By Mort McBain

Former County Administrator
Former County Board Supervisor
District #19

The dedication ceremony of the Hmong/Lao Vietnam War Veteran Memorial originally planned for May will now take place Saturday, September 24, beginning at 10:00 AM. **Once completed, this will be one of the most impressive memorials honoring Hmong veterans anywhere in the country.**

The dedication ceremony will be a significant event, consisting of spoken tributes to the veterans and others who served during the war in various capacities. **Midway through the tributes, there will be a fly-over of several T-28 Trojan aircraft—the type flown by Hmong pilots during the secret war in Laos.** After the ceremony, lunch will be served for all those attending.



Visitors will find the memorial on the east side of the Marathon County Courthouse, bordering 6th Street.

The black granite base is capped by a life-sized bronze sculpture depicting two Hmong soldiers helping a downed American pilot. The monument honors all Hmong/Lao Vietnam War veterans and does not include any names other

than General Vang Pao, the military leader of the Hmong during the war in Laos.

Numerous Hmong veterans being honored (as well as the committee who led this memorial project for the last several years) have expressed their appreciation to the County for making this public monument possible. Many of the County Board Supervisors donated personally to see this project to fruition, and there was a significant donation made by the County.

This will be the 6th memorial on the Marathon County Courthouse grounds honoring veterans. Others include the plaque honoring Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Second Lieutenant Jerome A. Sudut for his service in Korea; the memorial to Battle of the Bulge veterans; the bronze statue honoring World War I veterans; the memorial wall honoring veterans of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam; and the sculpture honoring Civil War soldiers from Marathon County. ■

View a drone-captured video of the Rotary Club's Bluegill Bay Fishing Pond Restoration project in action by [clicking here](#).



Bluegill Bay Pond Restoration Update



By Michael Beck

Centennial Chair
Rotary Club of Wausau

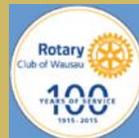
Fish in Bluegill Bay Park Pond (if they could talk) likely would have a "bone to pick" with the Rotary Club of Wausau...

The club worked with some extraordinary partners—including Marathon County—to develop and implement a plan to dredge key parts of the 6.5-acre pond to greatly improve fishing access for area residents. Rotary Club member and Marathon County Administrator Brad Karger guided the restoration effort from its inception more than three years ago.



The initiative was part of the club's centennial commemoration and seeks to improve outdoor recreation options as it teaches about the environment.

[The Rotary Club of Wausau](#) is part of an international service organization whose members try to live out its motto: "Service Above Self." It's centennial celebration focused on the vital role that water plays in local, national, and global communities.



Cleaning up Bluegill Bay Park Pond provided a great opportunity to mark the Rotary Club of Wausau's centennial anniversary because of the long-lasting effect it will have on the quality of life in the region.

Each year by mid-summer, the pond is choked by plants and algae because of excessive fertilizer runoff. In addition, sediment over the years has filled in the pond with organic materials, heavy metals, and sediment. All those items in the water make fishing frustrating—if not impossible—for children and adults, and limit other uses.

The fish, though, probably like it just the way it is. In fact, tests showed a robust fish community in the pond!

But the Rotary Club had other plans for the fishing pond...

Thanks to generous funds provided by the B.A. and Esther Greenheck Foundation, Rotary Club members worked with Peter Knotek (Assistant Director the Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department) and other key resources to study the deteriorating pond and to implement a plan to restore it during the summer of 2016.

In addition to the contribution from the B.A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation, the nearly \$400,000 project also received substantial support from Marathon County's Environmental Impact Fund, Wisconsin Public Service Foundation, Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin, Rotary Club members, and many others.

The Rotary Club's centennial project—thanks to the coordinated efforts and resources of many community partners—will give families a great place to fish and enjoy our regional natural resources for decades to come. ■

Why Do We Invest in Community Bike & Walking Trails?



By Andrew Lynch

Transportation Planner | Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator
Wausau Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
Marathon County Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department



Biking and walking—or “multipurpose”—trails have been increasing in number and mileage across the country ever since the completion of the Elroy-Sparta trail in Juneau County, WI, in 1967. Since then, thousands of residents and visitors have biked or walked that trail, and it’s become an asset for not only their county, but for the entire state as well. Why?

A well-constructed multiuse trail is an investment in a county’s transportation infrastructure that signals to others that your community has made a long-term commitment to the health, wellness, and economic vitality of your region.



The [Mountain-Bay State Park Trail](#) begins in Weston and ends nearly 90 miles to the east in Green Bay. The trail was developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the parks departments of Marathon, Shawano, and Brown Counties and is currently maintained through the generous contributions and volunteer efforts of the Friends of the Mountain-Bay Trail of the three counties through which the trail passes: [Marathon](#), [Shawano](#), and [Brown](#).

How does Marathon County benefit from the multipurpose Mountain-Bay Trail?

- Kids and adults can use the trail to get themselves to school and work, offering a safe transportation alternative.
- Everyone can enjoy the woods and wetlands the trail transverses. Easy access to nature and recreation opportunities are a positive “quality of life” aspect many people look for when deciding where to live.
- There are numerous physical and mental health benefits to increased daily physical activity, and this multipurpose trail provides easy access for exercise.
- The trail connects the communities of Ringle, Hatley, and Norrie to the Wausau area. These provide great stopping points to increase your mileage if you’re planning on a trip all the way to Green Bay, or a nice place to stop for a bite if the trip is more casual.

I invite you to click here to [view our most current Wausau area Bicycle Route Map](#).



With the fast pace of life nowadays, bike and walking trails provide the best way for everyone to enjoy our communities—at a human speed.

Learn more about the history of the Mountain-Bay Trail and find trail fees, opening/closing dates, and trail maps (for Brown, Marathon, and Shawano Counties) at the [Wausau & Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department’s webpage](#).

And for information on the Friends of the Mountain-Bay Trail, contact the Marathon County President, Helen Pagenkopf, at flowers2u2@gmail.com. ■



In November 2015, the Wausau Metropolitan Area was designated a bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists. This is a great honor and recognizes the hard work by many County and local staff and officials while providing a roadmap to further improve conditions for bicycling.

“It’s never been better than right now to bike in the Wausau area. Our community has made tremendous strides to become bicycle-friendly. From mountain bike trails to on-street bike lanes, the Wausau area is improving for all people who ride bikes.”

— **Aaron Ruff**
Chair Wausau Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Looking for safe biking and walking routes to school in Marathon County?

[Click here or visit BicycleWausau.org.](#)



Garbage on the Move Where Does It All Go?



By Meleesa Johnson

Director
Marathon County Solid Waste Department (MCSWD)



Have you ever wondered what happens to your garbage after it leaves your curbside?

Waste produced in our area travels in many different directions and sometimes great distances. At times, our waste haulers use their own landfills located in other counties or in northern Michigan. However, **a majority of the garbage placed at the curb—and a large portion of industrial waste in the region—finds its way to the Marathon County Solid Waste Department (MCSWD) in the town of Ringle for disposal.**

Waste haulers—whether large corporate companies or smaller independent ones—make the complex task of efficiently and effectively removing the waste from your neighborhoods seem like MAGIC...

Trucks often arrive along our streets during the wee hours of the morning, emptying your garbage bins while you sleep. Each truck is equipped with advanced GPS routing systems directing drivers through their busy day so they can find each and every pickup site. As their shift ends, they head approximately 15 miles east of Wausau, to MCSWD, to empty their truck and get ready to do it all over again the next morning while the next neighborhood sleeps.

Years ago, the trip from the curb to the disposal location was as easy as heading to the nearby city or town “dump.” But MCSWD is not the city dump of generations past... **As new standards for environmental protection emerged, dumps disappeared and “sanitary landfills” took their place—serving multiple communities, if not entire regions.** The strict federal and state regulations for today’s landfills set a framework for construction, operation, and closure of landfills. Continual and comprehensive environmental monitoring of the land, water, and air ensure that once waste arrives at the MCSWD, it’s done traveling for good.



Upper portion of photo shows active landfill operations at MCSWD.
Lower portion shows construction work for next phase of landfill.



We invite you to call for an **EDUCATIONAL TOUR** of Marathon County’s Solid Waste Department.

Tour the Landfill...

The best way to learn about everything we do is to come by and see it for yourself.

A tour may provide a look at the landfill, recycling, waste reduction, reuse, and hazardous materials collection. We also have miles of trails, native plant restoration, abundant wildlife, and bluebird nesting boxes.

If your group has an interest in touring the solid waste department site, please contact Meleesa Johnson at 715.446.3101, ext. 104, or visit our website (www.marathoncountysolidwaste.org) to learn more.

For all other questions, you may call our toll-free **Solid Waste & Recycling Information Line at 1.877.270.3989.** ■



Katie Rosenberg
County Board Supervisor
District #1
City of Wausau Wards #1, 2

Katie Rosenberg: Civic-Minded Since Grade School

Even as a second-grader, Katie Rosenberg could grasp the importance of civic engagement as she canvassed her neighbors and urged them to get out and vote. Now 32 years old, Rosenberg still strongly believes in the political process that propelled her to a seat as supervisor of Marathon County’s District #1 on the southeast side of Wausau. She’s also active throughout the community as a Board Member of the Wisconsin/Marathon County chapter of Kids Voting USA (an organization she’s worked with since 6th grade.) When she’s not working as a content strategist for Eastbay, Rosenberg also serves as a trustee on the Marathon County Public Library Board, as well as the Festival of Arts Board.

Politics is somewhat of a family business: Her County Supervisor seat was previously held by her father, Jim Rosenberg. Now that she represents the district that includes North Central Health Care (NCHC), she said the facility is her number-one priority and she does not support terminating the agreement with NCHC in favor of a new model for contracting mental health services.

“There is too much at stake to not have a solid roadmap for how the County plans on taking care of our most vulnerable citizens. I think that concerns about quality of care and cost are valid, but North Central Health Care is committed to the highest standards, earning joint accreditation—which isn’t easy—and staying up to date with the best practices in patient care.

Her other main priority is not only accessibility with her constituents, but also frequent interaction through district meetings and other correspondence.

“I have been very open about where I stand, why I vote the way I do, and what the public can do to make sure their voices are heard. I don’t think it’s any surprise that because of that, I routinely hear from many more people than my colleagues. I respond to every email, every phone call, every Facebook message, and every media request. ...As a communications nerd, I don’t want anyone speaking for me but me. If someone has a question, I will answer it because I don’t want there to be any assumptions about where I am on an issue.

As one of the younger supervisors on the board, Rosenberg is also looking for opportunities to increase transparency and to encourage participation and interest in the County Board’s activities. She’s already inquired about the possibility of livestreaming meetings and sharing more activities and actions through social media.

It’s all part of her goal to strengthen ties and develop new bonds between constituents and their elected officials. And it’s a continuation of her efforts to encourage participation in the civics process—efforts that can be traced back to her door-to-door days in the second grade. ■



Stay “in the know” with...

Wisconsin Central Time NEWS A Seasonal Marathon County eNewsletter

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.**

Seasonally (approximately quarterly), 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 in—and stepping up—to learn and work to make a difference right here in Marathon County.

If you or anyone you know would like to receive this eNewsletter, we invite you to [sign up here](#).

County Board 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