

Winter

# Sheboygan County News

A Newsletter for County Employees

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## Newsletter Preparation:

Kay Lorenz  
Kortnei Ames  
Michael Collard  
Adam Payne

## Departments Move to Improve

Jim Hulbert, Planning Director

Some significant changes will soon be evident in the structure of Sheboygan County government. These changes—which will save taxpayer money, provide better service to the public, and create more opportunities for job diversity, advancement, and shared roles for the employees involved—will take place in the Real Property Listing Office, Planning and Resources Department, Treasurer’s Office, Land and Water Conservation Department, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Remodeling of work spaces on the first and third floors in the County Administration Building in Sheboygan as well as the Agricultural Services Center Building in Sheboygan Falls will be completed in three phases and will precede the relocation and consolidation of affected staff. Phase 1 includes the remodeling of the Treasurer’s Office, Phase 2 focuses on remodeling of the current Real Property Listing Office, and Phase 3 will complete the project with the relocation of the staff from the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) and related elderly and adult services to the space currently occupied by the Land and Water Conservation Department as well as the vacant space formerly used by the University of Wisconsin Extension. As you recall, the UW-Extension relocated to their new office space at

the UW-Sheboygan campus in early 2008.

The remodeling in the Treasurer’s Office began the first week in November and will result in additional office space and increased storage capacity. At the time of completion in early January, the Real Property Listing Office as a separate entity will be abolished and the two Land Description Technicians will move to the Treasurer’s Office. These positions, which are commonly found in County Treasurer’s offices throughout Wisconsin, will streamline the flow of tax-related functions. One office in the previous Real Property Listing area will be retained by the adjacent Planning and Resources Department and will be occupied by the Land Use Planner and the Mapping Technician, both remaining as employees of the Planning and Resources Department.

Phase 2 of the remodeling will add new offices and update work areas of the previous Real Property Listing office on the third floor of the Administration Building. This remodeling will occur between mid January and March 2009. Upon completion, the Land and Water Conservation Department will relocate from the Agricultural Services Center Building in Sheboygan Falls to the newly remodeled space in the Administration Building adjacent to the Planning and Resources Department.

The co-location of the Planning and Resources Department with the Land and Water Conservation Department has many advantages including better interdepartmental coordination, easier joint field visits, improved communication, sharing of equipment and maintenance costs, improved access to County computer services, and enhanced secretarial coverage for both departments.

During Phase 3, which will be complete by the end of 2009, the offices of the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) and related elderly and adult services within the Department of Health and Human Services will relocate to the Agricultural Services Center building in Sheboygan Falls. ADRC staff are currently located in the former Baxter Building (Health and Human Services Annex—3rd Floor) on 8th Street in Sheboygan. The Sheboygan Falls location is also serving as the new expanded senior dining center, which was successfully implemented during the 3rd quarter of 2008 much to the delight of our seniors. Rather than paying rent, this move will allow the Health & Human Services Department to reallocate \$168,000 for direct services.

Due to the overwhelming positive responses we received following our 1st Annual **All Employee Appreciation Picnic**, we will be planning another picnic at the Airport. Please mark your calendars for **Thursday, August 13th!**

# Coroner's Office Meets its Responsibilities

by: David J. Leffin, RN, ABMDI-D, Sheboygan County Coroner



While we have the gift of life, it seems to me the only tragedy is to allow part of us to die—whether it is our spirit, our creativity, or our glorious uniqueness.

Harriet Beecher Stowe,  
Writer

By statute, certain deaths are reportable to the Coroner's Office for review and investigation. These include, but are not limited to, all homicides, suicides, deaths following an accident or injury even if the accident or injury did not cause the death, deaths involving motor vehicles, (including cars, boats, planes, snowmobiles, etc.), unusual or suspicious deaths, deaths where no physician has been in attendance in the past 30 days, deaths of correctional inmates, and deaths reportable as determined by the individual county coroner policies.

For all reportable deaths, the Coroner or one of the Deputy Coroners completes a death investigation. The investigation includes interviews, discussions with family members and physicians, and a review of medical records and medications. The investigator may take photos or obtain blood samples, and x-rays or an autopsy may be required to determine the cause and manner of death. An autopsy is ordered by the coroner's office, but is

performed by a pathologist—a physician who specializes in pathology. Dr. Mark Witeck, a forensic pathologist, performs most of the autopsies for Sheboygan County. The autopsies are done at the County Morgue, which is located in the lower level of the Courthouse. The Coroner's Office works closely and cooperatively with the Law Enforcement agencies in the county as well as with the funeral directors.

The Coroner's staff consists of the Coroner, David J. Leffin, who is in his 22nd year. Coroner Leffin is a Registered Nurse and is ABMDI-D certified. Robert Kulhanek is the Chief Deputy Coroner and has been with the office since 1987. He is trained as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and is also ABMDI-D certified. Robert served one term as the Sheboygan County Coroner from 1979 to 1980. The Deputies consist of Fred Pfile (this quarter's featured employee), Dean Van De Wege, who is an EMT-I; and Richard Hlavka, who is a Paramedic, is ABMDI-D certified and is a retired law enforcement officer.

ABMDI-D is the acronym for the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators—Diplomat. This is advanced certification in death investigation. The staff members that are ABMDI certified met the stringent criteria and training to sit for board certification and successfully completed this in January of 2008.

The coroner's office provides coverage 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is an on-call service, so there are no full or part-time employees and no set office hours. In 2007, the coroner's office investigated 550 deaths and completed an additional 174 cremation investigations.

\*See article about morgue upgrades below.

## InHealth Clinic Hires Former County Employee

**Interra Health has hired Susan Haag, LPN, former Health Information Secretary at Sunny Ridge Health Care Center, to assist at the InHealth Clinic. Sue started work on Tuesday, December 16.**

## County Plans to Expand, Modernize Morgue

by Jim TeBeest, Building Services Director & Robert Kulhanek, Deputy Coroner

Plans are in motion for an expansion of the County Morgue, located in the basement of the Courthouse, into the area that is now occupied by the Veterans Service Office. The expansion will bring the morgue back to its original size as per the 1933 Courthouse architectural plans. In anticipation of the expansion, the Veterans Service Office will be relocating, but those details have not yet been worked out. Included in the project will be new up-to-date equipment to

improve safety and, most importantly, the addition of an air-exhaust system which should eliminate any odor issues in the future.

Upon completion, the expanded facility will include office space for the coroner and deputies, a family visitation room, a conference space, record storage, a walk-in refrigeration unit that will accommodate four carts, and an autopsy station that is self-contained with water and drainage.

The expansion may also lead to additional tissue donations by providing increased space for the substantial number of medical professionals from either Milwaukee or Madison that are necessary on site to assure the viability of donated tissue is maintained.

Design work will begin in January 2009 with completion of the project expected prior to the end of the year.

# Health Fair Brings Organizations Together

by Michael Collard, Human Resources Director

Hundreds of County, City, and School District employees combined with 35 health and wellness-related organizations at the Blue Harbor Conference Center on November 15th to create an outstanding event.

Ruth Wilsing of the County, Jean Kittle-son of the City, and Jeri Dreikosen of the School District served as lead organizers of the Health Fair, which proved to be a fine



example of what can be accomplished when these three local governments combine forces.

The vendors and other representatives present were very happy with the attendance and participation by employees and their families. Several vendors reported that they had met with more interested employees than at any other health fair they had attended.

Participants were exposed to a wide variety of information and demonstrations of ways toward better health. Exhibitors included

Aurora, St. Nicholas Hospital, Interra Health, the YMCA, and many others.



One hundred free water park passes and 30 door prizes were given away. County employees came away with the most door prizes, although the two most valuable items (Wii systems with Wii Fit, donated by Aurora and St. Nick's) were won by school district employees.

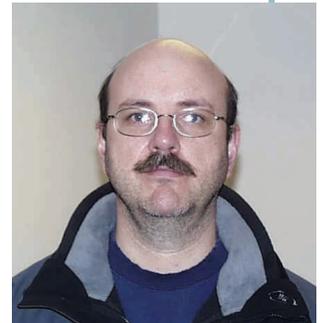
# Fred Pfile Brings Expertise to County Service

by Fred Pfile, Deputy Coroner

I was appointed a Deputy Coroner for Sheboygan County by Coroner David Leffin on January 1, 1989—nearly 20 years ago. I relocated to the Sheboygan area in 1982 when I accepted a full-time position with Orange Cross Ambulance. I was an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) from 1982 until 1991 when I became a National Registered Paramedic, and am currently certified as a NREMT-P. In 1994, I began employment as a career Firefighter and

Paramedic with the City of Manitowoc Fire Department, and still hold that position today. In addition to my full-time position and service as a Deputy Coroner for Sheboygan County, I am also an associate instructor for Emergency Medical Services with Lakeshore Technical College. In early 2008, I and three others in the Coroner's Office became Board Certified Medicolegal Death Investigators with the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators

Association. My wife, Julie, and I live in Sheboygan and have four children—James, Sara, Lauren and Amy.



**Sheboygan County Chamber Cash** is the perfect gift for any occasion all year round. Over 200 merchants throughout Sheboygan County accept Chamber Cash, which is available in \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$25 denominations.

If you don't know what to buy for that special birthday or anniversary, try Chamber Cash. If you don't know what to buy for that special teacher or coach, try Chamber Cash. If you don't know how to recognize that special employee or volunteer, try Chamber Cash.

Chamber Cash is only available at the Sheboygan County Chamber of Commerce, 712 Riverfront Drive, Suite 101.

# Emergency Notification Project Progresses

by: Jim TeBeest, Building Services Director

The Courthouse and Annex fire alarm system is currently being updated and expanded. The work on the project began in November 2008 and completion is expected by July 2009. These changes are being made to provide increased safety for staff and the public, and are beyond code requirements.

The project also includes the expansion of the public address system in the Courthouse as well as installation of a public address system at the Administration Building. This system will primarily be used to notify building occupants during an emergency such as a tornado or for security issues.

The work is being accomplished during business hours and will affect each and every room, so please be patient with the installation team. They will make every effort to keep disruption to a minimum.



# Preparedness Helps Manage Risk of Pandemic Flu

by: Sheboygan County Division of Public Health

*Health officials believe that it is only a matter of time until the next flu pandemic strikes. Employees are encouraged to take steps to prepare their families for a future pandemic. Preparedness plans provide families with a sense of control when it feels like everything is out of control!*

A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges among humans and spreads easily from person to person. Because the virus is new to humans, people have little or no immunity and the virus spreads worldwide.

Pandemics, while rare, are not new. In the 20th century there were three flu pandemics—in 1918, 1957 and 1968—that combined killed more than 50 million people worldwide and almost a million people in the United States. The severity of disease and the number of deaths caused by each of these past pandemics varied but their impact, especially the 1918 Spanish Pandemic, was considerable.

One new type of avian influenza, or “bird flu”, has raised great concern among scientists worldwide. As is common with avian influenza viruses, this new strain of avian influenza, called the H5N1 virus, spread among wild birds such as ducks and geese. However, it is now also spreading to domestic birds such as chickens in Asia, Europe and Africa, putting human health at risk. There have been cases of humans who have become ill by coming into close contact with infected poultry or surfaces contaminated with secretions/excretions from infected birds. More than half of the humans

known to be infected with the H5N1 virus have died.

So far, the spread of H5N1 virus from person to person has been very rare. However, influenza viruses have the ability to change, and health professionals are concerned that H5N1 viruses or some other avian strain of flu could change enough to spread easily from one person to another. This could start the next flu pandemic.

## **Pandemic flu IS NOT the same as seasonal flu.**

With pandemic flu:

- People have little or no immunity;
- Symptoms may be more severe and complications more frequent than seasonal flu, even among healthy children and young adults;
- The death rate is higher;
- There may be a major impact on society (for example, there may be restrictions on travel and closings of schools and businesses in an effort to slow the transmission of the disease and there could be significant absenteeism in businesses, utility service providers, and other organizations).

The United States has developed a National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza to guide the country’s preparedness and response to an influenza pandemic. Significant investments have been made to increase capacity to produce vaccines quickly and in large quantities. Public Health personnel across the U.S. are working with community partners to

finalize and test their pandemic influenza preparedness plans. In Sheboygan County, the Division of Public Health is assuming a lead role in this local process.

Businesses, schools, other institutions and local communities are being urged to undertake pandemic preparedness planning, as are families and individuals.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS INCLUDE:**

**Plan** for the possibility that some businesses and schools may be closed and public services—including transportation—may be disrupted.

**Stockpile** a two-week supply of water, non-perishable foods and other necessities, and be sure you have prescription and non-prescription medicines on hand.

**Maintain** lists of emergency contacts and important health information—including allergies and blood types—for all family members.

**Stay healthy.** Eat well, exercise, and practice behaviors that limit the spread of germs: frequent hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, obtaining an annual flu vaccine to avoid the seasonal flu, and avoiding others when you or they are sick.

More information is available at [www.PandemicFlu.gov](http://www.PandemicFlu.gov).

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508 NEW YORK AVENUE  
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