



THE COMMUNICATOR

Editors: Jocelyn Goodney, Administrative Assistant I
Dawn Mergen, Personnel Specialist

Volume 18, Issue 2
July, 2020

Grant County Employee Newsletter

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Introducing Amanda Degenhardt Finance Director

Hello!

I started as your Finance Director / County Auditor on May 26. I have a Bachelor of Science from the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse and have been a CPA licensed in Wisconsin for over twelve years. Over my professional career, I've had the opportunity to obtain a wide variety of accounting and auditing experience. I have worked as a Staff Accountant at a public accounting firm, analyzed financial data and prepared financial statements at a large insurance company, performed audits on governmental and not-for-profit entities, and worked as an Income Tax Specialist for the Montana Department of Revenue. Most recently, I was the Controller at a local energy cooperative where I managed the office staff and was responsible for all financial operations and policies.

I currently reside in Fennimore with my husband, Logan, and our three children. In our free time, we love to travel, camp, fish, and we keep busy when at home by tending to our garden and working on projects around the house.

I'm very excited to be part of the Grant County team and look forward to working with each of you!





Changing Work Environments and Work Practices

Submitted by Joyce Roling, Personnel Director

Things changed in a hurry early March when Coronavirus became a common word in daily conversations. Soon after, coronavirus became referred to as COVID-19. All Grant County Departments were affected. Leaders and staff stepped up quickly and efficiently to modify work places, create policies, procure needed resources to work from home, and prepare for physical office closures. It's only been 3 ½ months, but it seems like much longer. When an unforeseen change needed to happen, staff adapted quickly.

Workplace changes are most successful when well planned and communicated. Typically, changes are eased into. There was not a lot of time for planning and there was no "easing" into this workplace change. Coping with so many changes at once took a toll on many both physically and emotionally.

Now that the dust has settled, we are in some sort of daily routine. However, our efforts to successfully sustain viable options to continue to provide services were set up to be temporary. We are hoping very soon to be opening up our offices again. This change will be planned and will happen more slowly.

When returning to the workplace, you will notice that the atmosphere will be different than before. Shaking hands may be a thing of the past. Social distancing will become the norm. Plexiglass or glass shields will be in place. You will likely have different ways of doing things. For example, you may be limiting in person interactions and have more virtual contacts. There will be more sanitation products around the offices in random places (hand sanitizer, wipes). You will be asked to clean and disinfect frequently used surfaces in your office, such as telephones, door handles, etc. You will see more signage as reminders of remaining safe.

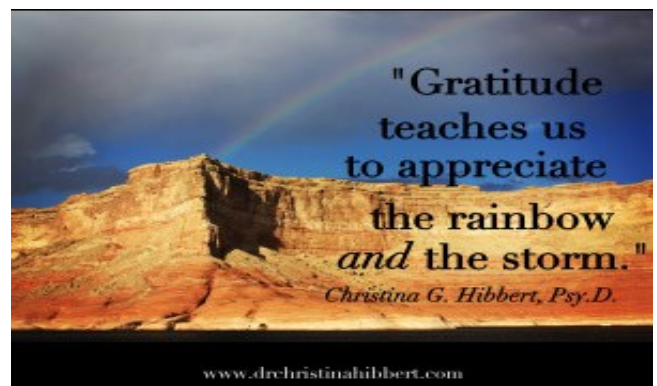
All precautions will be taken to ensure a safe work environment for staff and clients. The County looks forward to all of you returning to work when it is safe to do so. Take care and be safe.

Your attitude is like a box of crayons that color your world. Constantly color your picture gray, and your picture will always be bleak. Try adding some bright colors to the picture by including humor, and your picture

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begins to lighten up.

- ALLEN KLEIN



Grant County Fair
916 E. Elm Street Suite B
Lancaster, WI 53813
(608) 723-2135 Email – aolson@co.grant.wi.gov
www.grantcountyfairwi.org



RE: Grant County Fair 2020

The Grant County Fair has been a tradition for 165 years with many facets to making it all come together to create a successful event. We showcase our exhibitor's hard work, and provide the community a place to gather with their family and friends.

Given the uncertainty and hardship that COVID-19 has created everywhere, it has made planning the 2020 fair challenging this year. The situation was monitored for months and meetings were held to determine an alternative way of having a fair. We were facing many obstacles. Difficulties in sanitizing, social distancing, and still giving the kids an enjoyable experience showing were identified. Families would have to wait in line so the carnival could disinfect in between rides and they were not going to bring all their rides due to the guidelines they must follow. We also would have to limit the people in the grandstand area, buildings, and barns. Our area processing plants are experiencing heavy bookings and have limited space for our fair animals. Many of our volunteers and superintendents that are well around 200 people had concerns of attending. All this was taken into consideration in trying to plan the fair this year among other complexities. Ultimately, the answers kept coming back to the safety concerns of everyone attending the fair and the future of our fair.

It was after careful consideration and recommendation from the Grant County Health Department, guidelines from the WEDC and CDC that we announced the cancellation of the 2020 Grant County Fair. The unknown of what August will bring and the planning that still had to take place in hopes that another outbreak doesn't occur weighed heavy on all of us. Keeping our attendees and exhibitors safe was our number one priority. We made the decision based on what we knew today rather than what we thought August was going to be like.

I want to thank everyone that helped us try and plan a fair in 2020. The Grant County Fair Board and I look forward to coming back in 2021 stronger than ever with the same entertainment lineup. Be well everyone and stay safe through the summer.

Sincerely,



Amy Olson
Grant County Fairgrounds & Operations Director

June 7 through June 13, Wisconsin Register of Deeds Week

Grant County Register of Deeds, Marilyn Pierce, has been with the county for 43 years! *(She has been the Register of Deeds for the past 36 years!)*

Marilyn is joined by Deputy Register of Deeds Andrea Noethe, and Administrative Assistant Susan Stohlmeyer, in storing and providing all vital records for Grant County for birth, marriage, death, real estate, and much, much more.

This designation is not given every year, *so let's all be sure to recognize them in the near future for the very important role they play in County Government!*

STATE of WISCONSIN



OFFICE of the GOVERNOR

Proclamation

WHEREAS, the office of the Register of Deeds in Wisconsin is older than our state itself, having been established in 1836 to protect the integrity of land ownership; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Constitution established the Register of Deeds as a permanent element of the county-level government structure in 1848; and

WHEREAS, in 1907, the Register of Deeds statutorily became the designated office where all vital records for birth, marriage, death, and military discharge would be accepted, indexed, filed, stored, and issued; and

WHEREAS, the Register of Deeds office serves as the official county repository for all real estate and vital records, as well as for safe archival storage of and access to these records for the public; and

WHEREAS, over the last 172 years, our Register of Deeds offices have filed, recorded, and issued a multitude of land record instruments and documents of significance to both the community as a whole and individual residents; and

WHEREAS, formed in Milwaukee on June 4, 1918, the Wisconsin Register of Deeds Association (WRDA) continues to work with its business partners throughout our state and nation to provide services that are convenient, efficient, beneficial, and safe through technology, system modernization, and implementation of statutory changes; and

WHEREAS, this week, the state of Wisconsin joins the WRDA in celebrating the active and important role our Register of Deeds offices play in all 72 counties;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tony Evers, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, do hereby proclaim June 7 – 13, 2020, as

WISCONSIN REGISTER OF DEEDS WEEK

throughout the State of Wisconsin and I commend this observance to all our state's residents.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Wisconsin to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in the City of Madison this 4th day of June 2020.



TONY EVERS
GOVERNOR

By _____ Governor:



DOUGLAS LA FOLLETTE
Secretary of State

Grant County Health Department
April 6 at 4:20 PM

Today kicks off the start of National Public Health Week! You've been seeing a lot of content from our department in the past month, as we cover COVID19. This week we will share more about our Public Health team and what they are doing behind the scenes to keep Grant County safe.



86 9 Comments 12 Shares



May 3-9, 2020 National Correctional Officer Week

During our current pandemic, we have some genuinely unsung heroes in our midst, those being our correctional deputies here in Grant County. Correctional deputies remain tasked with the safety and security of the Grant County Jail, which is part of their regular duties. Still, additionally, they are now working hard to keep COVID-19 from entering the jail.

Each day they come to work, knowing that there is a chance they could experience exposure to COVID, and take it home to their families. So not only do they experience the normal stressors of working in a correctional facility, they now have the added stress of our current situation.

We can't express enough our appreciation for the men and women who work in the Grant County Jail. They arrive daily with a sense of purpose, maintaining a safe and secure jail.

This week is our time to honor them, recognize them for their selfless work, and give our thanks for doing a job that is not often publicly recognized.

Sheriff Nate Dreckman
 Chief Deputy Jack Johnson
 Captain Travis Klaas - Jail Administrator



April 12, 2020

Today marks the start of National Telecommunicators week, our 911 dispatchers. It is a time when we stop and recognize some of the unseen, but heard members of the public safety team. We are truly appreciative of their work, as they are the hub of public safety here in Grant County.

We have a great team of dispatchers here at the Sheriff's Office and recently we have really put a lot of pressure on them. Many of you may not know, but the 911 center is still at the old jail. Since the first part of November they have been in the building by themselves, as everyone else has moved to the new building. If that's not isolating enough, we have now ordered, due to COVID-19, that no one is to stop in at dispatch anymore to help mitigate the spread of it into our dispatch center. The deputies and other staff would stop in from time to time and visit them, but no longer, further isolating them.

We just want to express our appreciation for them this week. So if you know one of our team members reach out and thank them:

Captain Rick Place, Communications Supervisor Chris Johll, Sheri Zart, Andrea Reynolds, Audrey Fotzler, Tyler Kirschbaum, Tom Schindler, Levi Vial, Stephanie Moore, Steve McKillip,

Have a great week and be safe, wash your hands, and practice proper social distancing!

Sheriff Nate Dreckman



March 30, 2020

The Grant County Sheriff's Office is proud to show off the newest addition to our squad cars, a wrap supporting Autism Awareness!

Deputy Duane Jacobson worked with multiple organizations and businesses to get his squad car wrapped with graphics in the hopes of bringing more awareness to autism. Additionally he is working with some local groups as well to develop more training for law enforcement on how to recognize autism and provide them with tools to assist them in dealing with a person with autism.

We are excited about this chance to bring attention to such an important topic and truly appreciate the support from Aiming For Acceptance, Unified Therapy, WKM Psychology Clinics and Big River Sign, Co. Their generous support allowed us to place the graphics on the squad at no cost to the Sheriff's Office. Thank you!

Sheriff Nate Dreckman
 Deputy Duane Jacobson



Dana's Desktop

Dana C. Andrews, Grant County IT Technician



Computing During This Pandemic

During the Covid-19 crisis, many are depending on technology even more to try and keep up with their daily routines. Video calls are up 212% and VPN traffic has increased 40%, according to cable provider Comcast. More than half (53%) of U.S. adults say the internet has been essential for them during the pandemic while another 34% describe it as “very important” according to a Pew Research Center survey. So, with all this unplanned traffic, are we at risk of a complete system collapse of the internet?

Despite the increase in demand, Computer Scientist Amy Babay, assistant professor with the School of Computing and Information, doesn't think we are even close to testing the limits of the internet. “For the most part, I think things are pretty stable. A lot of my research is on fault tolerance and scalability. Those are key principles of how these systems are designed,” said Babay. “Prior years computer science research has been focused on preparing for times exactly like these.” Fault tolerance, or the ability to keep working even if parts of the infrastructure fail, allows the internet to reroute if physical links don't work. And scalability, she said, gives the infrastructure the ability to cope with increased demand. According to Cisco's last annual internet report, in 2018 there were 3.9 billion users with an average networked device count of 2.4 per user. By 2023, the expectation is 5.8 billion users will be networking 3.6 devices each. So the recent additional use has not really pushed the goals already set for projected demand.

Among big increase in usage during this pandemic has been video conferencing. Zoom video conferencing made news when it shot up from 10 million users a day to 300 million in the early part of 2020. Here are some other user numbers of video collaboration type tools that are new records for them.

Zoom 300 million per day

Google Meet 100 million per day

Microsoft Teams 75 million per day

Slack 12.5 million users per day

Cisco Webex 10.8 million per day

Skype for Business 4.9 million per day



(There are other popular services such as Facebook Workplace, and Apple Facetime but they do not report daily user numbers.)

Recent statistics say we are back using our computers and laptops more these days. The last few years there has been a focus on phone apps for popular websites (Facebook, Netflix, YouTube, etc). However, during this quarantine period, two usage tracking sites, SimilarWeb and Apptopia have reported severe drop offs in traffic numbers for these phone-based programs even though there are greatly increased numbers of visitors to the sites themselves.

Some other behavior changes that have been noted during this period have included more use of social chatting. This is Facetime, Facebook, and the other platforms for video conversations not related to business. Google Duo has reported a 12.4% increase in usage, while Nextdoor.com has seen 73.3% more traffic and Houseparty (app) has enjoyed a whopping 79.4% increase. In general, programs that allow multiple users to visually see and communicate with each other have experienced the greatest growth.

Not surprising, there has also been explosive growth in online learning and sites that assist in working-from-home. Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams, Slack, and other collaboration sites are all being highly utilized during this shut-in.

Another interesting change noted in behavior is our consumption of news. The desire for the latest facts on the virus and recent protests appears to be curbing interest in the more opinionated takes from partisan sites, which have defined the media landscape in recent years. Publications like The Daily Caller, on the right, and Truthdig on the left, have recorded stagnant or falling numbers. Even Fox News has seen disappointing numbers compared to other large outlets. Local news sites on the web on the other hand, have seen the greatest growth in viewership to date. The current number one, most visited news site is the homepage of the Center for Disease Control (The John Hopkins maintained Coronavirus website also continues to be very popular).

A last observation is probably the most expected statistic of all. Sport sites have experienced a severe downturn in visits while online gaming has more than doubled the number of users. ESPN has been especially hard hit during the current sports blackout.

Is Rural Internet Coming?

A division of Elon Musk's SpaceX, called Starlink, is planning to provide internet broadband to under-served or previously unreachable parts of Earth, including rural areas of the US. Using thousands of low-Earth orbit satellites (12,000 are eventually planned) along with ground-based devices, this swarm is expected to provide fast modern internet service. The company says it should have a limited offering in the northern US and Canada by the end of the year with service expanded globally throughout 2021.

One of the biggest issues that this space-based system has to address is latency, or the time it takes for signals and data to travel between locations. Minimal latency is critical for real time applications. Lengthy latency causes video streams to buffer, resulting in spotty, sputtering calls and frozen, blocky, screen images while many online services will "time out" and stop responding. This is the problem associated with most current satellite providers like ViaSat or HughesNet. These services rely on a handful of big satellites in geostationary orbit, over 22,000 miles above Earth. Because signals and data have to travel back and forth across such long distances, these satellite services often have high levels of latency. SpaceX claims its technology, and lower-altitude satellites can meet and exceed the current FCC's latency requirements. The FCC has said it will allow low-Earth orbit satellite companies to apply for development funds if a company can meet a sub-100 milliseconds round-trip latency requirement. Starlink expects to qualify for the first phase of the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund. Elon Musk has stated that current testing shows latencies of 20ms or less. A version 2 satellite orbit that is even lower than the current one, is expected to cut this down further to 8ms. Interestingly, Elon stated that when they first started this project, they were focused on bandwidth (Gigabyte speeds) but have come to realize that latency was the important part to make this work. Starlink still expects to provide up to 600MB of throughput.

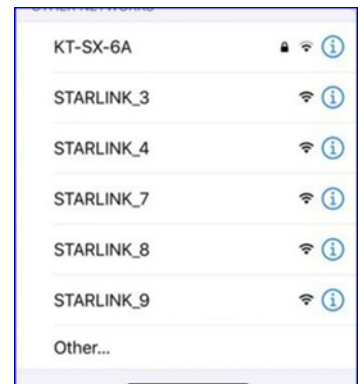


Image of iPhone connecting to the Starlink swarm

If you are interested and may want to try this service at some point, you can sign up at <https://www.starlink.com>

Sports in a Coronavirus World

If you haven't heard, the NBA is going to have a limited season conducted "in a bubble". A section of Disney World will be sealed off for exclusive use of the NBA to conduct training, practice, games, and championships. This possible 'preview' of sports for the next year includes some chilling restrictions on normally free-wheeling sports stars. In a document sent out June 16th, the steps being used to protect against infections were delineated. Included in these guidelines are a couple of novel uses of technology to help with virus containment/control.

* Video technology will be used to help with contact tracing. Anyone who was within six feet of someone who tested positive for at least 15 minutes or had "direct contact with infectious secretions and excretions" (i.e. was coughed on) will be considered a "close contact" and tested.

* Players and staff will have the option to use wearable rings that track temperature, heart rate, respiration rate and other variables. This device provides an "illness probability score."

The wearable health (or smart) rings mentioned in the above are made by the Oura company. This is a Finnish wearable technology start-up that was noted in two separate studies to accurately predict the onset of Covid-19 symptoms. The Las Vegas Sands (Venetian and Palazzo resorts) earlier this year purchased 1,000 of these rings for their staff to ensure customer safety. Unlike Apple Watch and Fitbit, these rings also track body temperature.



Want to know more about Smart Jewelry? Here is a Top 6 list of the different types in the marketplace today:
<https://www.gizmos.com/best-smart-rings-health-fitness/a>

UW Health Care Anywhere

UW Health Care Anywhere Video Visits give you quick, convenient access to a medical provider, whenever you or a family member needs urgent care. From the comfort of your home or work, Care Anywhere is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. You can take advantage of affordable urgent care video visits from your smartphone, tablet or computer equipped with a web camera.

Quartz will continue to cover the following at 100% through July 31, 2020:

Telehealth, e-visits, video visits, virtual visits: No copay, coinsurance, or deductible for all diagnoses when the provider is in our network. Reach out to your provider or check their websites for information on these services.

After July 31st, how much does a video visit cost? Connect with a medical provider for \$49 per visit.

How does it work WHEN YOU NEED CARE?

1. Log in to MyChart and find Urgent care video visits in the Quick Links menu. You can also access Care Anywhere from the mobile app or at uwhealthcareanywhere.org.
2. Pick the medical provider who works best for you from a list of available health care providers.
3. Provide information about your current medical concern you've contacted them about, along with some of your medical history. Also, choose the pharmacy most convenient for you in case the doctor writes you a prescription.
4. The doctor you've selected will review this information before starting the video visit.
5. After reviewing your symptoms and listening to your concerns, the health care provider may provide a diagnosis, suggest follow-up care or prescribe medication when appropriate.



To learn more, call Quartz Customer Service at (800) 362-3310 or visit [https://quartzbenefits.com/docs/default-source/employers/covid-employers/employer-care-options/qa00287etf\(0320\).pdf?sfvrsn=aff98afe_2](https://quartzbenefits.com/docs/default-source/employers/covid-employers/employer-care-options/qa00287etf(0320).pdf?sfvrsn=aff98afe_2)

Deferred Compensation Retirement Contributions

Representatives will be here on September 17th.

Staff can also sign up for appointment slots at the following links.

Nationwide Retirement Solutions: <https://kerrylj1.checkappointments.com>

Wisconsin Deferred Compensation: <https://sw.wisconsin.timetap.com/>



Retirement Recognition

April 1, 2020 through June 20, 2020

Lou Ann Blackburn (Orchard Manor), **5 years** (retired April 24)

Terry Hodgson (Highway), **20 years** (retired May 20)

Deb Udelhoven (Health), **43 years** (retired May 28)

Laura Damm (Register of Deeds), **5 years** (retired May 29)

Kathy Mumm (Orchard Manor), **15 years** (retired June 1)

Keith Edge (Highway), **15 years** (retired June 2)

Grant County wishes you a happy and healthy retirement!

Reminder: Please contact the County Personnel Office at least two months before your retirement date so we can assist you with the process.

Service Anniversaries

July, 2020 through September, 2020 (5 year increments)

Nathan Dreckman (Sheriff), **25 years** on July 31

Jennifer Carl (Orchard Manor), **25 years** on August 22

James Robison (Orchard Manor), **15 years** on September 9

Thomas Schindler (Sheriff), **15 years** on September 14

Dana Andrews (Information Technology), **10 years** on July 26

Mark Schwarz (Sheriff), **10 years** on August 1

Ashley Randall (Clerk of Court), **5 years** on July 6

Jackie Page (Orchard Manor), **5 years** on July 20

Brian Northouse (Highway), **5 years** on August 10

Frankie Stanton (Orchard Manor), **5 years** on September 3

Team Grant County

Welcome to our Team!

New Employees - March 1, 2020 through June 20, 2020

- Grace Kite** ~ March 6 ~ Orchard Manor
Allison Mann ~ March 10 ~ Sheriff
Michael Kemerling ~ March 12 ~ Orchard Manor
Joseph Bayer ~ March 16 ~ Sheriff
Julie Durst ~ March 19 ~ Emergency Management
Michael Adams ~ March 31 ~ Conservation, Sanitation and Zoning
Heather Franklin ~ April 1 ~ Orchard Manor
Bobbie Schultz ~ April 1 ~ Orchard Manor
Erin Walker ~ April 1 ~ Orchard Manor
Amanda Stepanek ~ April 8 ~ Orchard Manor
Beatrice Mumm ~ April 16 ~ Orchard Manor
Shannon Bartels ~ April 23 ~ Orchard Manor
Brittany Childs ~ April 23 ~ Orchard Manor
Maria Kindrai ~ April 23 ~ Orchard Manor
Armella Recker ~ April 23 ~ Orchard Manor
Julia Pintz ~ April 27 ~ Orchard Manor
Jessica Robinson ~ April 28 ~ Orchard Manor
Chasity Rogers ~ April 28 ~ Orchard Manor
Jennifer Mariskanish ~ April 30 ~ Orchard Manor
Amanda Carns ~ May 8 ~ Orchard Manor
Rachel Bailie ~ May 13 ~ Orchard Manor
Nathaniel Clardy ~ May 19 ~ Orchard Manor
Reid Larson ~ May 19 ~ Orchard Manor
Amanda Degenhardt ~ May 26 ~ Finance
Tina Breuer ~ May 27 ~ Facilities and Maintenance
Cody Blindert ~ May 28 ~ Orchard Manor
Britney Wall ~ June 10 ~ Orchard Manor

Anyone wishing to have a specific subject discussed in a future newsletter may contact Joyce Roling at 723-2045 or jroling@co.grant.wi.gov.

Health Care Providers Emergency Responders



Activities
Administrator
Admissions Specialist
ADN
BSN
Chief Deputy
CNA
Corporal
Deputy
Dietary
Dispatcher

Economic Support
Emergency Management
Environmental Health
Home Health Aide
Jail Captain
Jailer
LPN
MDS Coordinator
Medical Records
Music Therapy
Nurse

Occupational Therapy
Physical Therapy
Public Health Aide
Quality Assurance
RN
Sergeant
Social Service Director
Social Service Worker
Social Worker