



THE COMMUNICATOR

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Grant County Employee Newsletter

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The End to an Unprecedented Year

As we moved into 2020, many in Grant County were relieved that two major projects, the construction of the Community Services Building and the Sewer Pumping Station were nearly behind us. The move of departments into CSB, except for dispatch, had been successful. Sure there were some hiccups along the way but we felt good about the position of County operations going forward. Yes we needed to deal with an aged, nearly obsolete, communications system but plans were well on their way for that project leaving the building of a tower and updating radio equipment seem minor to the shakeup of ADRC, Social Services, Emergency Management and Law Enforcement during the past 4 years. The recent installation of a fiber optic line which connected the CSB/ Orchard Manor Campus to the Fairgrounds, Highway offices, the Law Enforcement Center, and Administration/Courthouse would allow for stable connectivity that did not previously exist. Along with the communications system, the demolition of the vacated '52 building, the sale of the former Law Enforcement Center, a possible storage building near CSB, and onboarding a new Finance Director appeared to be the agenda of Grant County government operations for 2020.

Needless to say, as the rumblings of a disease originating in China started to hit multiple media outlets, all normalcy was out the window as we needed to prepare for the COVID-19 Pandemic. By the first week in March a small group of concerned department heads started meeting to prepare for what we thought could be a 6 week to 6 month challenge. We soon learned that the battle would shut down not only our operations, but the economy of our nation, creating havoc within a couple of weeks. The amount of reactive measures that took place in that next month were enormous. We still operate under a State of Emergency Declaration which has included 10 proclamations for the many modifications in operations. We continue to operate with multiple County facilities remaining closed to the public. We extensively use virtual means of communications to hold meetings. And we maintain a concerted effort to promote the safety of everyone. On behalf of the Grant County Board of Supervisors, I thank everyone for the dedication to provide services to the public with few interruptions. Even though some services look much different, the adjustments are commendable. All staff and elected officials should be proud of our TEAM as we continue to work toward normalcy while maintaining as safe of a work environment as possible. The emergency release of vaccinations does provide hope, a bit of light at the end of the tunnel, but we can't let our guard down as we continue to operate.

Be Considerate
Wear a Mask

Be Safe



Robert Keeney, County Board Chair

In light of the developments of COVID-19, we will continue to do the best we can with the resources we have. We understand that the work environment has changed significantly from start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyone continues to do an amazing job of balancing work and family, some by working remotely and others at the workplace. Working in isolation, social distancing, working with PPE's, modifying processes, and realigning priorities are all challenging but we have done it. It is exciting to see the continued collaboration as we make progress with projects and deal with the issues we face to provide services to the residents of Grant County in a transparent, efficient and accountable manner.

Grant County was able to accomplish many projects in this year of the pandemic:

- Elections were a concern as we moved into the spring election, through the Primary and General Fall Election. All involved from County Clerk's office down through municipal clerks, poll workers and other support did a great job of making this happen smoothly in a safe fashion.
- Department Heads worked diligently with our new Finance Director to give a balanced budget while maintaining the increase to keep us on track with our pay schedule to reach market.
- The sale of property near the Law Enforcement Center to Kwik Trip took place which created some revenue while taking away added maintenance costs.
- CARES funding, including nearly One Million Dollars of Routes to Recovery reimbursement, has made it possible to complete various technological, equipment and facility upgrades for better future utilization of space and efficiency of operations.
- The demolition of the '52 Building and Wastewater Treatment Plant did take place. While the final burial of the rubble is waiting for DNR approval, much of the area has been leveled and graded.
- The new Next Generation E911 has been brought online allowing us to vacate personnel from the Law Enforcement Center. Construction of the new Communications Tower has started which hopefully will allow for total vacation of the LEC by spring.
- We continue to improve technology in Grant County. Improved system security, additional VOIP phones, updated County Board room and further extension of our Fiber Network will increase productivity.
- Grant County Highway Department continues to upgrade the system with a couple of major projects planned over the next 3 years.
- A buildout of the 3rd Floor of the Administration building is taking place which will increase the utilization of the facility and allow for relocation of departments for more efficient operations.
- We continue to see changes in staffing. We appreciate the dedication of retirees and welcome new faces as we move into the future.

One thing is for sure, what the future brings is an unknown. As we move into the holiday season, consider tradition as a sense of normalcy. I hope it's possible to put the COVID-19 fatigue on hold for a bit and enjoy family gatherings in a safe manner.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS !!!



Dana's Desktop

Dana C. Andrews, Grant County IT Technician



Interesting TidBits....

Faster Than a New York Minute

Scientists have measured the shortest unit of time ever; the time it takes a particle of light (called a photon) to cross a hydrogen molecule. If you remember your high school science, hydrogen molecules are the simplest, hence smallest of all molecules. Yet, amazingly, we now have the technology to measure a photon's trip from one side of the molecule to the other. Specifically, it takes a whopping 247 zeptoseconds to cross. *Why the photon crossed the molecule, I will leave to your speculation.*

A zeptosecond is a trillionth of a billionth of a second (*.00000000000000000001 of a second*). The old standard of micro time measurement prior to this was the femtosecond (a millionths of a billionths of a second), whose discovery led to a Nobel Prize in 1999. These tiny measurements are important to scientists.

Femtoseconds are used to calculate how quickly chemical bonds form or break. And knowing how many zeptoseconds it takes for light to go from one side of a molecule to another is used to calculate how quickly molecules react to changes. For the first 246 zeptoseconds, one side of the molecule experiences something the other side does not. (*Note that 247 zeptoseconds is an average. Molecules are never quite the same size.*)

So when asked how quick you need it done, remember the Zeptosecond!

How Strong Is Your Resume?

Here is an example of someone writing that they changed a light bulb:

"As single-point contact, managed the upgrade and successful deployment of a new environmental illumination system with zero cost overruns and no safety incidents."

Starlink to the Rescue

By now, most of you have heard of Elon Musk's attempt to provide internet services to remote locations using a network mesh of satellites in low Earth orbit. As of November 2020, there are now over 900 of these mini internet providers in space. Enough that initial testing has started with select individuals and groups.

One of the earliest test groups also showed how versatile and novel this system can be. After the devastating fires in Washington state this past fall, SpaceX provided the state's emergency response division with several Starlink user terminals. These terminals were used to provide internet access to communities

whose infrastructure had been destroyed by the wildfires. From search and rescue operations to insurance communication to resource management or for people just checking in with loved ones, these devices were able to provide internet services without having to travel how many miles to the closest undamaged town.

While we have been anticipating their ability to provide internet access to rural areas in Wisconsin, we are now also seeing some of the other advantages to a universally available internet. In a recent social media event, called an AMA (Ask Me Anything), engineers from the Starlink project admitted they are looking at this serving mobile operations such as camping trailers, house boats, or even hikers willing to carry an antenna dish (and power source) with them. How soon before we see Lake Winnebago covered in ice fishing shanties with satellite dishes on the roof?! All kidding aside, the potential to place emergency or essential services in remote areas promises an exciting future. Oh, and by-the-way, the Washington state users said they worked great.

Speaking of Being Connected Everywhere

NASA recently announced that they have awarded NOKIA a grant to start the process of providing 4G cellular service on the moon. Yes, that's right. The Moon. The money given to Nokia was one of several awarded under NASA's Tipping Point program used to advance research and development in space exploration.

Nokia is planning a cellular 4G/LTE network for the moon that will be upgradable to 5G later on. The network will support wireless operations, navigation, and streaming video (after a long day of exploration who wouldn't want a little "Netflix and Chill"). Nokia's challenge will be to make a system that is compact and efficient as well as designed to withstand the extreme temperatures, radiation, and vacuum conditions of space. Personally, I am thinking how these moon astronauts will use flip phones in their bulky spacesuits is another issue to be addressed.

Creepy Crawlies for Good

This next story made my skin itch. Scientists at Cornell University have announced that they have created a microscopic sized robot that can crawl using 4 legs. These little droids are small enough to be injected with a needle (10 of them can fit inside the period at the end of this sentence). The hope is someday they can be adapted to hunt down cancer and other diseases in your body. Professor Cohen from Paul McEuen Labs noted that they can currently mass produce over a million of these bots in less than a week.

Another Reason to Shop Online

LG, in partnership with Assa Abloy Entrance Systems of Sweden, is developing automatic sliding doors with transparent OLED displays. LG says the doors will be aimed at businesses and will allow them to greet customers, communicate with employees, and show ads (but mostly show ads). I wonder if we will have to accept cookies before they will open the door? LG already provides transparent windows for subways in Beijing and Shenzhen (China).

Do you have money left in your flex account?

Remember with healthcare and daycare flex you USE IT OR LOSE IT. You must request reimbursement before March 31st, 2021 for your 2020 healthcare and daycare flex election balances. Contact EBC or the County's Personnel Office if you have questions.

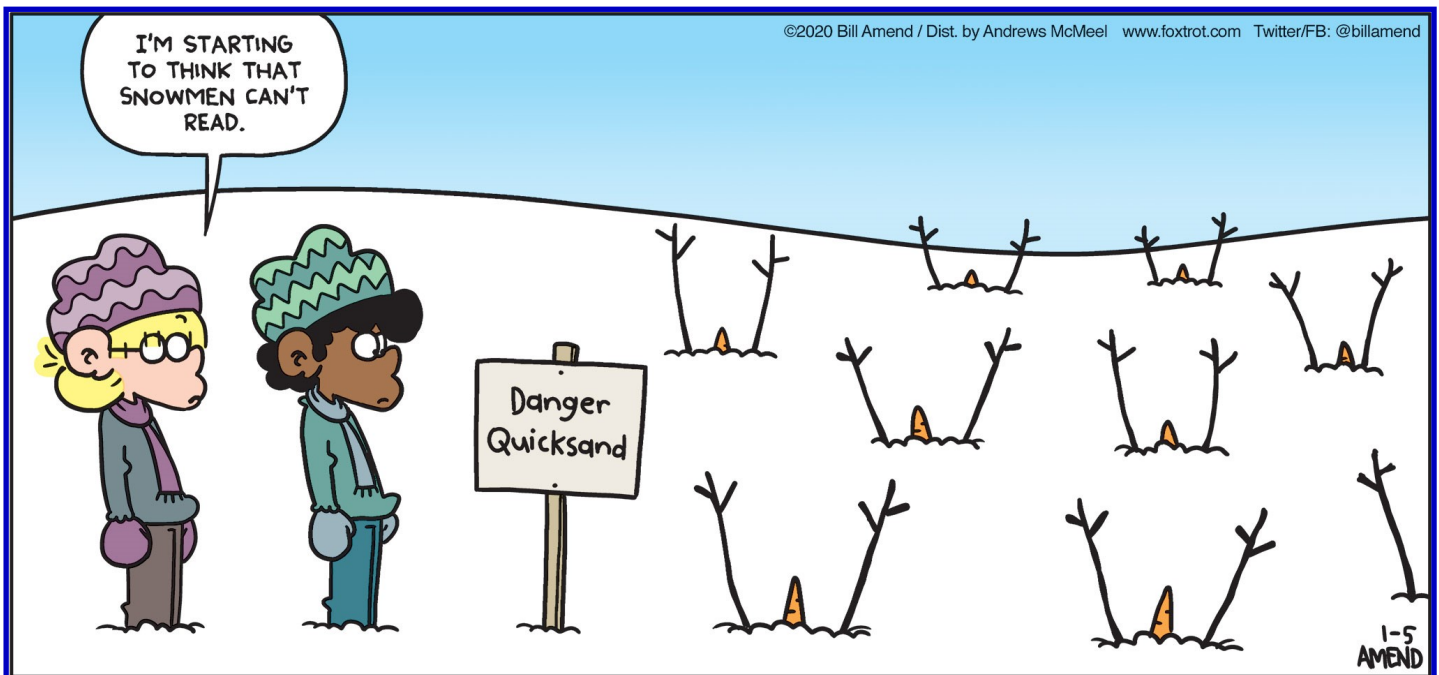
EBC: (800)346-2126 or www.ebcflex.com
Grant County Personnel: (608)723-2540 or dmergen@co.grant.wi.gov

2021 Paid Holidays

The following is a listing of Grant County's year 2021 observed paid holidays:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| New Year's Day..... | Friday, January 1, 2021 |
| Friday Afternoon before Easter..... | Friday, April 2, 2021 |
| Memorial Day..... | Monday, May 31, 2021 |
| Independence Day..... | Monday, July 5, 2021 |
| Labor Day..... | Monday, September 6, 2021 |
| Veteran's Day..... | Thursday, November 11, 2021 |
| Thanksgiving Day..... | Thursday, November 25, 2021 |
| Christmas Eve..... | Friday, December 24, 2021 |
| Christmas Day..... | Monday, December 27, 2021 |

The New Year's Day holiday for the year 2022 will be Friday, December 31, 2021.



Retirement Recognition

September 13, 2020 through December 21, 2020

Linda Rech (Orchard Manor), **23 years** (retired October 3)

Robin Vance (Orchard Manor), **24 years** (retired October 7)

Jane Whitish (Social Services), **36 years** (retired December 21)

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

January, 2021 through March, 2021 (5 year increments)

Kathy Ames (Orchard Manor), **40 years** on March 2

Mareeta Kolman (Health), **20 years** on January 3

Todd Miller (Sheriff), **15 years** on February 5

Chad Chappell (Sheriff), **15 years** on February 12

Nicole Johnson-Pohle (Orchard Manor), **15 years** on March 13

Ned Witzig (Highway), **5 years** on February 1

Brian Belscamper (Highway), **5 years** on March 1

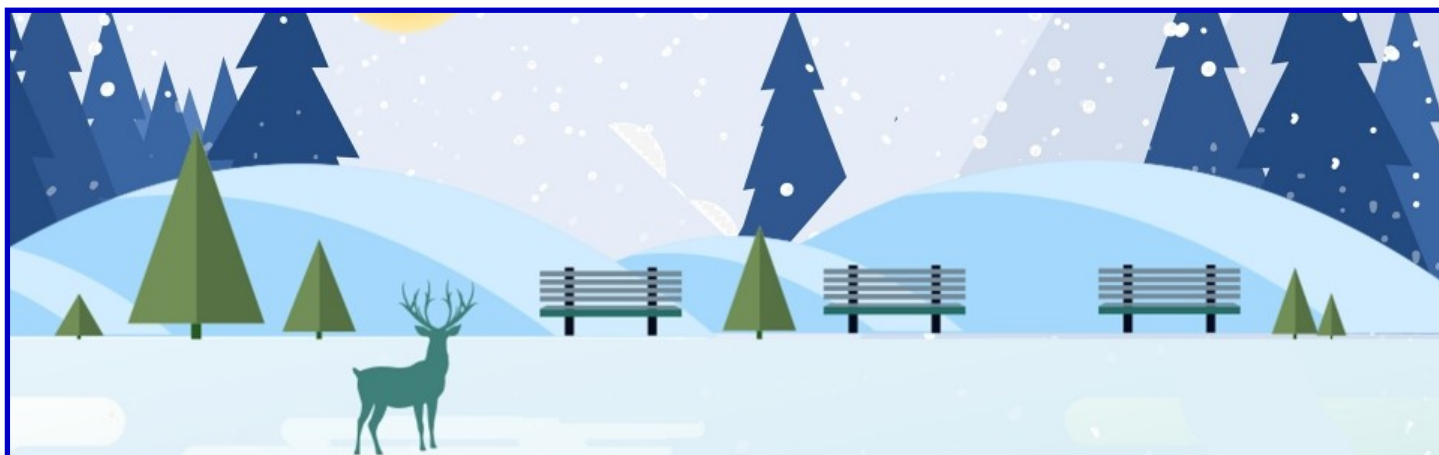
Blake Bender (Sheriff), **5 years** on March 21

Team Grant County

Welcome to our Team!

New Employees - September 13, 2020 through December 5, 2020

- Mindy McHugh** ~ September 17 ~ Child Support
- Haizen Birchman** ~ September 18 ~ Orchard Manor
- Jacob Millard** ~ September 23 ~ Health
- Julie Atkinson** ~ September 25 ~ Health
- Christopher Baird** ~ October 1 ~ Health
- Virginia Schaefer** ~ October 2 ~ ADRC
- Ellen Gundrum** ~ October 5 ~ Emergency Management
- Sadie Lawson** ~ October 7 ~ Social Services
- Beth Strangstalien** ~ October 7 ~ Orchard Manor
- Emily Dow** ~ October 12 ~ Emergency Management
- Michelle Roesch** ~ October 13 ~ Health
- Brooke Reuter** ~ October 19 ~ Health
- Jolinda Waterman** ~ October 19 ~ Health
- Martin Barnard** ~ October 21 ~ Orchard Manor
- Victoria Doll** ~ October 21 ~ Orchard Manor
- Joseph Lolwing** ~ November 4 ~ Sheriff
- Brynley Pritchett** ~ November 6 ~ Orchard Manor
- Amber Gessler** ~ November 16 ~ Health
- Linda McCarthy** ~ November 16 ~ Health
- Patricia Randecker** ~ November 16 ~ Health
- Samantha Mullikin** ~ November 17 ~ Orchard Manor
- Rena Hilger** ~ November 19 ~ Orchard Manor
- Shannon Bartels** ~ November 27 ~ Health
- Kari Wilson** ~ December 3 ~ 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.

COVID-19

R D F N J A L Q C D G R R N R
E P E X E A C I U D N E E M E
D N D M U G M T I Z I S L S S
K Q I T R E A S I V T T I U P
R S R C D I T T I V S R E L O
P I A N C A F D I M E I F U N
V A A M N A J N I V T C S M S
J P U C F X V J O F E T B I E
K Y I L S V D Z X C V I O T N
A N K L O O H C S E M O H S G
G P O S I T I V E G O N Z E M
C O R O N A S U R I V S R Y O
Q S M O T P M Y S H F M C V O
A G I D M I F S M D S N V B Z
B D W K R P B P E F B C J P C

ACTIVE
DISTANCING
MASK
POSITIVE
RESTRICTIONS
TESTING
VIRUS

CONFIRMED
GERMS
NEGATIVE
RELIEF
STIMULUS
VACCINE
ZOOM

CORONA
HOMESCHOOL
PANDEMIC
RESPONSE
SYMPTOMS
VIRTUAL