



THE COMMUNICATOR

Editor: Dawn Mergen, Personnel Specialist

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Grant County Employee Newsletter

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Jon and Debbie Knautz

Highway Commissioner Newly Appointed Highway Commissioner, Jon Knautz

Greetings! This is Jon Knautz, the newly appointed Highway Commissioner for Grant County. I have been working for the Highway Department since 1986. My first position at the highway department was as a heavy-truck driver for our paving crew. I was assigned to a section patrol position in 1993. At that time, I reported to a small truck shed directly behind the Tennyson wayside. In 2000, the department built a new building in Dickeyville. I was fortunate to be one of the guys who got to move into it. In February of 2007, I was appointed to a superintendent position within the Highway Department. I remained in that position, due in large part to an excellent bunch of dedicated and talented employees here at the Highway

Department, until April of this year. I have taken over for Dave Lambert who recently retired after 16 years as commissioner.

As commissioner, I oversee the day to day operations at the Highway Department. We have one engineer, an office manager, an accounting assistant, two supervisors, a shop foreman, a paving foreman and 44 operators on payroll. I am responsible for a variety of duties including, the direct planning, coordination and management of the maintenance and construction activities for the county roads, preparing and presenting the annual budget to the County Board, coordinating and working with town, village and city officials, as well as the supervision of all Highway Department staff.

I live in rural Platteville with my wife, Debbie. We have three children and seven grandchildren. We enjoy spending time with our grandchildren and attending their various activities. We especially like boating, golfing, and attending classic car shows in the area.

Dana's Desktop

Dana C. Andrews, Grant County IT Technician



A Clean Astronaut Is a Happy Astronaut



NASA recently announced a new partnership with Procter & Gamble (makers of Tide) to develop a laundry detergent that can be used in space. Apparently, when crew members are sent to the space station, they pack enough changes of clothing to last for the duration of their assignment (and then bring their dirty laundry back home to mom). However, this scheme is not feasible for future extended projects like long trips to Mars. With water being so precious and having soap suds floating around being an issue (unless there is a raver going on), a new clean is needed. No doubt with Xtreme Factor 3 power!

Follow up on Space Wine

In a previous article there was a story about how an experiment was conducted on the space station to see if wine aged any differently outside the confines of earth gravity. That mission is over and one of the bottles is now being auctioned off by Christie's with an estimated price of one million dollars. Also included in the auction offering is a same vintage and year 'regular' bottle of wine (for comparison), a corkscrew made out of a meteorite, and all of this is packaged in a special trunk created by Les Ateliers Victor (of Paris). Professional testers who have sampled the other space bottles noted that they could tell a difference. "The aromatics were more floral and more smoky" according to Jane Anson, journalist and author of Inside Bordeaux.



Peering into the Unknown

Two achievements have been attained recently in microscopic technology. A University of Oxford physicist, David Nadlinger, was able to photograph a single atom. Using long exposure photography of a blue-violet laser exciting a single positively charged strontium atom, he was able to image the photons being emitted (what we usually see are photons being reflected from an object so this is very similar). While we have been able to examine molecules for some time, this is the first time an atom has been made visible. And while this is a special case (strontium atoms are very large), it provides a new method to try with other elemental objects.



In the second breakthrough, University of Queensland researchers created a quantum microscope that uses entanglement to study extremely small biological processes. This is important because all previous microscopes use light, usually high-power lasers for small objects, that quickly burn up the specimen being examined. However, this new method will allow not only examination but monitoring of living tissue because it is a non-destructive technique.

Be Your Own Friend

Replika is a messaging app with a twist. Instead of a human at the other end, it is an artificial intelligence (AI). It starts with a long series of questions but as the AI learns about you, it starts to customize the responses until, hopefully, it will seem like a replica of you (or maybe a close brother or sister). The start-



up company, Luka, explains it this way, *"Replika was founded by Eugenia Kuyda with the idea to create a personal AI that would help you express and witness yourself by offering a helpful conversation. It's a space where you can safely share your thoughts, feelings, beliefs, experiences, memories, dreams – your private perceptual world."* Some possible uses of this include being a digital twin for the lonely, a living memorial of the dead, or maybe it will be coupled with another app that will allow it to process mundane tasks. I'm pretty sure mine will just tell me bad puns all day...

Speaking of Which

One of the biggest commercial uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI) right now is text generation. Constantly reading internet traffic to learn how humans communicate, the AI's are utilized to generate text responses to a variety of apps (such as the app that lets you talk to historical figures). The best known of the AI text-generators is a system known as GPT-3. The company that runs this recently reported it is being used in over 300 different apps and currently produces 4.5 billion words a day. While providing responses to your questions, these machines are also rating your conversations for things like mood, emotions, sentiment, and current themes. Originally, AIs were not very savvy which led to issues like encouraging suicidal behavior or amplifying harmful biases (they'd swear a lot). However, the current state of technology has worked through most of that and the non-human human is starting to be very effective at routine tasks and queries.

What's Your MEI?

MEI is the acronym for Media Engagement Index and it is a measure used by Google Chrome to provide user statistics for website video viewing. Under their category of 'significant media playback' it records if you watch an audio or video stream for more than 7 seconds at a resolution of more than 200x140 pixels (a very small box). The use of this particular data-point is users who's score exceeds a certain threshold get autoplay turned on automatically (Chrome recently disabled our ability to turn autoplay off). To check your own MEI; open Chrome and type in the address bar: *chrome://media-engagement*. The top part of the resulting page will show the settings and the bottom part will show your scores.

Better than an iRobot

A Japanese company named Astroscale has launched the first of what they hope will be many, space-debris cleaning rockets. Named ELSA-d, it is a pair of satellites that are testing how to capture orbital junk and push it into Earth's atmosphere, where it will burn up as it descends. The current design will not work with existing space trash but future satellites will be equipped with a special plate/dock that will allow the system to work. According to NASA, there are currently 26,000 pieces floating around that are the size of a softball or larger. Orbiting at 17,500 mph, they would destroy



any object they hit. NASA also says there are 500,000 smaller pieces that pose a threat to protective systems, fuel tanks and spacecraft cabins. Additionally, another possible 100 million pieces are currently orbiting earth with a size of a grain of sand that, at speed, could still puncture critical systems and space suits.

No More Cookies? (Gasp)

Google Chrome is working on a replacement for all those annoying browser cookies (cookies are small amounts of data saved in your browser to identify certain features about you). Called FLoC (Federated Learning of Cohorts), it uses your browsing history and activities to identify broad behavior and interests. This means no more loading third party data or saving publicly accessible files on your PC. This new system is more anonymous and less targeted than the current cookie system. Google's aim is to have FLoC fully implemented by 2022.



Did you Know

The first tweet ever sent was on March 21, 2006 by Jack Dorsey, one of the originators of Twitter. "just setting up my twttr " would result in one of the most influential apps to ever be created. It was sold as an NFT (non-fungible token) for \$2.9 million dollars (paid for with cryptocurrency of course).



...with Lasers mounted on their Heads



Do you remember the line in the Austin Powers movie about killer sharks having lasers mounted on their heads (or was it 'ill-tempered sea bass')? Well, Dyson, the vacuum people, have done it. Their model V15 Detect has a green laser mounted that throws a blade of light angled such that you can better see the dust and wooly-buggers your still missing. I'm dropping the mic at that...

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

Aflac

Grant County's benefit eligible employees may participate in Aflac. This coverage helps you pay for medical related out-of-pocket costs.

Policy changes/enrollments are effective July 1st and January 1st.

Michelle Nodorft (608-778-8057) from Aflac will be in Lancaster to meet with employees that would like to learn about the coverage types, have questions, or want to make changes.

Please see the below schedule and choose the location(s) and time(s) that work best for you.

November 18, 2021

9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Community Services Building (Lobby Conference Room)

11 a.m. Presentation at the County Board Room; must contact Personnel Office if plan to attend

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Administration building (Conference Room 266)

1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Orchard Manor (Conference Room 104)



Deferred Compensation Retirement Contributions

Grant County partners with Wisconsin Deferred Compensation program and Nationwide deferred compensation program, to provide an additional avenue of saving for your retirement other than WRS. All benefit eligible employees have the option to save through pre-tax or after-tax payroll deduction.

Representatives will be in Lancaster to meet with employees that would like to learn about deferred compensation, have questions, or want to make changes to their accounts.

Please see the below schedule and choose the location(s) and time(s) that work best for you.



September 16, 2021

Nationwide Retirement Solutions; Kerry Johnson (608)825-2516

9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at Orchard Manor (Conference Room 104)

11 a.m. Presentation at the County Board Room; must contact Personnel Office if plan to attend

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Administration building (Conference Room 266)

1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Community Services Building (Lobby Conference Room)

Wisconsin Deferred Compensation; Eric Jochimsen (608)241-6604

9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Community Services Building (Lobby Conference Room)

11 a.m. Presentation at the County Board Room; must contact Personnel Office if plan to attend

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Administration building (Conference Room 201)

1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Orchard Manor (Conference Room 104)

Retirement Recognition

March 14, 2021 through July 17, 2021

Kim Spease (Orchard Manor), **40 years** (retired April 2)

David Lambert (Highway), **16 years** (retired April 9)

Brian Bierman (Sheriff), **31 years** (retired June 2)

Andrew Fritz (Highway), **23 years** (retired July 13)

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, 2021 through September, 2021 (5 year increments)

Rita White (Orchard Manor), **35 years** on July 7

Jon Knautz (Highway), **35 years** on July 14

Randall Chambers (Conservation, Sanitation and Zoning), **35 years** on August 4

Lisa Myers (Orchard Manor), **35 years** on September 4

Peter Janisch (Facilities & Maintenance), **25 years** on September 3

James Dresen (Highway), **15 years** on July 17

Tonya Mish (Orchard Manor), **15 years** on July 26

Cindy Berntgen (Orchard Manor), **10 years** on July 15

Amanda Mooney (Orchard Manor), **10 years** on July 15

Nancy Goforth (Orchard Manor), **5 years** on July 18

Brad Digman (Conservation, Sanitation and Zoning), **5 years** on July 25

Robert Kinder (Highway), **5 years** on August 8

Andrea Noethe (Register of Deeds), **5 years** on August 29

Alex Bahl (Social Services), **5 years** on August 30

Penny Hill (Orchard Manor), **5 years** on September 8

Team Grant County

Welcome to our Team!

New Employees - March 14, 2021 through July 31, 2021

Miranda Addison ~ March 15 ~ Social Services
Shawna Randecker ~ March 15 ~ Social Services
Olivia Landon ~ March 22 ~ Orchard Manor
Grant Vance ~ March 22 ~ Orchard Manor
Meg Walker ~ March 22 ~ Orchard Manor
Breann Duve ~ March 31 ~ Orchard Manor
Andrea Kunz ~ March 31 ~ Orchard Manor
Ryann Wilson ~ March 31 ~ Orchard Manor
Daniel Kliebenstein, Jr. ~ April 2 ~ Emergency Mgmt
Nancy Moore ~ April 7 ~ Emergency Mgmt
Taylor Schneider ~ April 8 ~ Orchard Manor
Steven Kliebenstein ~ April 9 ~ Emergency Mgmt
Jimmy Bogardus, Jr. ~ April 12 ~ Highway
Tyler Timmerman ~ May 9 ~ Sheriff
Tyler Mosley ~ May 10 ~ Sheriff
Angelic Place ~ May 12 ~ Orchard Manor
Jakob Cridelich ~ May 17 ~ River Access
Madelyn Hampton ~ May 20 ~ Orchard Manor
Danica Marx ~ June 1 ~ Health
Megan Miles ~ June 17 ~ Orchard Manor
Heather Myers ~ June 17 ~ Orchard Manor
Jenna Hill ~ July 6 ~ Sheriff
Della McCarville ~ July 6 ~ Health
Virginia Snider ~ July 8 ~ Clerk of Court
Emily Gundrum ~ July 9 ~ Emergency Mgmt
Alexis Holder ~ July 12 ~ Social Services
Nathan Tranel ~ July 13 ~ County Clerk
Melissa Kress ~ July 14 ~ Sheriff
Olivia Haffele ~ July 15 ~ Orchard Manor
Taylor Jackson ~ July 15 ~ Orchard Manor
Grace Schaffer ~ July 15 ~ Orchard Manor
Denise Davis ~ July 20 ~ Health
Robert Block ~ July 23 ~ Fair
Devany Dreckman ~ July 27 ~ Fair
Lucas Finley ~ July 27 ~ Fair
Derek Moore ~ July 27 ~ Sheriff

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.

Anxiety Reduction and Relaxation Techniques



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

Aromatherapy
Bath
Breath
Cleaning
Creativity
Exercising
Forgiveness
Friends

Gardening
Generosity
Gum
Humor
Journaling
Massage
Meditation
Mindfulness

Music
Nature
Pets
Positivity
Reading
Singing
Socializing
Spirituality

Tea
Therapy
Visualization
Volunteering
Water
Yoga