

# 2010 COUNTY CLERK'S ANNUAL REPORT

The County Clerk's Office is one set up by State Statute as an elected position of county government. We are located on the first level of the Courthouse building. The main areas we are involved in are:

- ❖ **Licensing:** Marriage, Domestic Partnerships, DNR, Dogs and Automobiles
- ❖ **Elections**
- ❖ **County Board**
- ❖ **Budget and Accounting**
- ❖ **Office Supplies**
- ❖ **General Information**

Members of the office in 2010 were: Clerk John C. Benz, Deputy Clerk Melanie Stake, and Accounts Payable Supervisor Donna Teschner.

## LICENSING

### **Department of Natural Resources**

Issuing DNR licenses is usually a daily activity with many tasks involved. In 2010, our office handled DNR licenses in the amount of \$5,739.50.

County revenue from the sale of DNR licenses in 2010 was \$262.00. The County received \$1.00 for each combination or deer license sold; \$0.50 per fishing, turkey or small game license; and \$0.15 per stamp, application or permit. The bulk of the fees are sent to the DNR. The time and effort to maintain the license program well exceeded any revenue we received and must be viewed as a service to the taxpayers.

### **Marriage Licensing**

Marriage licenses processed in 2010 numbered 140. This involves issuance of a license following completion of an application process. The overseeing office at the State level is the Department of Health Services, Vital Records Office. All forms and procedures are prescribed by that office and State statutory guidelines. Certified birth certificates, divorce decrees, death certificates and parental consent forms are some of the types of paperwork used in the application process.

Marriage license revenue for 2010 was \$3,810.00. Here again, license fees do not greatly supplement County Clerk revenues by the time the "pot" is divided. Of the current \$80.00 marriage license fee, the County Clerk receives \$25.00 (plus any five-day waiting period waiver fees), \$10.00 goes to a domestic violence fund, \$25.00 goes to the State, and the remaining \$20.00 goes toward family mediation fees for divorces.

We also instruct brides on how to change their names on their social security cards, and by State Statute, provide young couples with a booklet on the effects of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, other drug use, and smoking during pregnancy.

### **Domestic Partnership Licensing**

The former governor's 2009-2011 budget included a provision for "domestic partnerships"; legal partnerships between same-sex couples. Beginning in August 2009, the Clerk's Office was charged to take domestic partnership applications and issue the licenses. Should these same couples want to dissolve this partnership in the future, the Clerk's Office would also have to be involved. The Clerk's Office charges the same fee for domestic partnership licenses as it does for marriage licenses. In 2010, however, this office did not issue any domestic partnership licenses.

### **Dog Licensing**

We assign tags and license supplies to all 26 municipal treasurers in December. They collect dog license fees until early February. Dog licenses are also sold by the Clerk's Office on behalf of all municipalities who have authorized us as a "collecting official." County-wide there were 2,581 dog tags and 17 kennel licenses issued in 2010.

According to State Statutes, we publish notices twice a year explaining dog rabies vaccination and licensing requirements. Fees in 2010 were \$3.00 for spayed/neutered dogs and \$8.00 for unspayed/unneutered dogs. By State Statutes we must also charge a \$5.00 late fee for all dog licenses purchased after each April 1<sup>st</sup>.

The County receives ninety-five (95) percent of dog license fees, plus any late fees. The State gets five (5) percent. The County's revenue in 2010 was \$11,843.60. We are required to compensate municipal treasurers \$0.25 for each dog they license. We often receive telephone calls regarding lost dogs, which involve locating information in order to reunite the dog with its owner.

### **Temporary License Plates**

The County Clerk's Office issues temporary license plates for autos and light trucks. Customers are assisted with filling out the proper forms that are then sent to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation with titles and payment. During 2010 there were 210 temporary license plates sold with revenues of \$1,050.00.

## **ELECTIONS**

The Wisconsin Government Accountability Board, Elections Division, in Madison oversees election actions of county clerks. Four elections were conducted during 2010. County level elections involve collection and filing of nomination papers, declarations of candidacy, and campaign registration statements. Additional election duties for the County include:

- ❖ Acquiring and distributing election supplies to municipal clerks.
- ❖ Preparing and distributing ballots.
- ❖ Publishing election notices.
- ❖ Tabulating phoned-in election tallies on election night.
- ❖ Overseeing the County Board of Canvassers following each election.
- ❖ Filing official canvass with State Government Accountability Board.
- ❖ Conducting recounts as necessary.

The state and federal governments have heaped many additional election duties onto county clerks and their staffs over the last several years, and there has been little, if any, funding provided to implement and maintain these mandates. One example is the computerized Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS), which has been in use since 2006. Some examples of the many activities associated with this system are:

- ❖ Generating poll lists that are provided to municipalities prior to each election.
- ❖ Entering new voter information into the statewide system.
- ❖ Running reports and issuing notices to those voters whose names and driver's license numbers or social security numbers do not match Wisconsin Department of Transportation or Social Security Administration records.

Another state and federal mandate requires each polling location to have an approved handicapped-accessible voting machine. Through group purchases coordinated by the County Clerk's Office, each municipality has two such voting machines. Every election, this office is charged with providing programming information to voting machine vendor Command Central. This requires us to gather data on county, municipal, and school board races and compile this data into the format prescribed by Command Central.

Since most municipal clerks are part time and don't have the time or resources to accomplish the many tasks associated with SVRS and voting machine programming, the County Clerk's Office performs these functions on their behalf. We currently provide SVRS and voting machine programming services to 23 of the County's 26 municipalities.

## COUNTY BOARD

The Clerk's Office coordinates all items for County Board meetings, including preparation of various information papers, resolutions, ordinances, proclamations, appointments and the County Board agenda.

The *Waushara Argus* receives copies of agendas. In addition, official minutes of the proceedings are recorded, transcribed and then published in the *Argus*. A record of all County Board minutes and actions are maintained in the Clerk's Office.

Our office maintains an ordinance book and prepares the annual County Board proceedings book along with an annual County directory of public officials.

## BUDGET & ACCOUNTING

The County Clerk's Office keeps all records of accounts, receipts and disbursements and has primary responsibility for coordinating and reconciling financial records of all County departments. Donna Teschner is the Accounts Payable Supervisor.

The accounting procedures include a variety of tasks. Examples are: IRS Form 1099-MISC issuance, voucher entries, receipt entries, journal and ledger entries, and running numerous reports relating to vouchers and budget. Financial reports relating to vouchers are prepared for presentation to department heads and the Executive Committee. Disbursement checks are prepared from authorized vouchers. To give you an idea of overall volume, our office processed almost 10,000 financial checks in 2010.

Donna also audits individual departments to see how they are doing within their approved budgets. Accordingly, the departments have access to reports relating to financial activities and effects on their budget accounts. The annual County budget document is produced by our office as well as a lengthy budget notice that gets published in the *Waushara Argus*. The entire budget process is a large undertaking that covers several months. Donna works closely with many departments and the Executive Committee to prepare the individual departmental budgets that are then compiled into the overall County budget.

## OFFICE SUPPLIES

We are a central point of contact for most purchasing, serving as the County's purchasing agent. Purchase orders provide a very necessary track in getting the right orders to the right departments. They also offer an official authorization slip from the County to purchase. Purchase orders are issued from our office and used by many departments.

Common office supplies are purchased in larger quantities and provided to departments as requested. We seek good quality at a good price, while meeting departments' brand preference. Copy paper is an example of a supply bought through the purchasing agent and charged to each department as they use it. Most departments utilize this central purchasing of supplies, although some prefer to order on their own.

In 1993, Waushara County joined the Central Wisconsin Public Purchasing Association, which is a buying consortium of counties, school districts, cities and other governmental agencies. Through volume purchasing, lower pricing is accomplished for the individual members of this group. The County is also a member of "Vendor Net," a program whereby purchases can be made using the buying power of the State of Wisconsin.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The County Clerk's Office is an overall information source to much of the public. We provide County college transcripts, seller's permit forms, raffle license applications, Wisconsin State tax forms, directory information (Waushara and other counties), copies of Statutes and legislative materials, timber permits, maps, and scheduling of meeting rooms. We also print and distribute the annual County statistical report.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie R. Stake  
Waushara County Clerk (as of January 3, 2011)