

# Dickinson County Newsletter # 44

March 2009

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Produced by Mardi Allen, thanks for the information provided by participating departments

Picture supplied by Jolynn Harms



**Dickinson County Employee Parking Lot Update** (from Brad Beck): The bid letting for the parking lot was held at the March 24<sup>th</sup> Board of Supervisors board meeting. There were 4 bidders and Beck Excavating had the low bid coming in at \$325,911.77. The Engineer's estimate was \$369,576. This does not include the lighting and signage which both fall under separate contracts. Brad Beck, the engineer, said that the total cost will be closer to \$396,576 rather than \$440,000. The late start date is set for July 1, 2009 which means construction can start anytime from now until July 1<sup>st</sup>. Beck Engineering will coordinate the parking lot project with the City of Spirit Lake and their 19<sup>th</sup> Street project. There will be a need for patience throughout this project.

### **FY2010 Budget:**

The public hearing for the 2010 budget was

held on March 16<sup>th</sup>. The budget PowerPoint presentation can be viewed on the County web page. The budget was approved as presented with the General Fund levy remaining at 2.06, the Mental Health levy lowered to 0.204 and the Rural Basic levy increased 0.10 to 1.75. This chart is one page of the 40 page budget presentation.

### **Federal Stimulus Money awarded to the Secondary Road**

**Department** (from Dan Eckert): The State of Iowa is planning to distribute the Federal Economic Stimulus funds through existing formulas to the Regional Planning Affiliates and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations. As a result, the Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission (NWIPDC), of which Dickinson County is one of the 9 county members, will receive approximately \$5.8 million.

The NWIPDC held a meeting with its technical committee to determine how the \$5.8 million of Federal Economic Stimulus funds would be distributed. Dickinson County was able to attain almost 30% of the funds allocated to the 9 county Regional Planning Affiliation and will receive \$1.065 million for an Un-bonded Portland Cement Concrete overlay project on County Road M27 from Highway # 9 southerly 4 miles to 190<sup>th</sup> Street. In addition, the county applied for and received an addition \$510,000 to resurface County Road N22 along the Emmet County line. This project is from the Minnesota border southerly 3 miles to 130th Street. This will have significant benefits to the Counties local budget in the Fiscal Years of 2011 and 2012. These were the two fiscal years that these projects would have been completed.

**What is an EOC** (from Michael Ehret): An Emergency Operations Center is essentially the headquarters for a disaster; it's where an organization comes together during an emergency to coordinate response and recovery actions as well as resources. Sometimes called command centers, situation rooms, war rooms, etc., it is where the coordination of information and resources takes place. Don't confuse the EOC with the Incident Command Post, or ICP. The ICP is located at the scene of the event, while the EOC is typically at a separate location, away from the main incident.

In Dickinson County, our EOC will be located in the Community Room. The room is large enough to accommodate the staffing necessary to operate it, has the AV equipment required and can be partitioned if necessary. Recent upgrades approved by the BOS now allow the room to function on the courthouse generator should we lose commercial power to the building.

Staffing of the EOC is largely dependent on the event taking place. For example, during our blizzards this winter, the EOC has been partially activated, but only in the Emergency Management office with only the Coordinator operating it. A larger event, such as a tornado strike or a flood like that of 1993, would warrant a much larger staffing. In the case of the latter, we might need several agencies represented such as Law Enforcement, Public Works, Finance (Auditor's Office), National Guard, Public Information Officer, GIS, and so on.

Following the tornado in Parkersburg this last summer, I volunteered to help Butler County by working a shift at their EOC in Allison. It was a very good experience as I had not worked an EOC prior to that. Initially their EOC was open 24x7 in the first few days following the event. Persons working it said the phones were ringing non-stop during that time. I worked it about one week after the event and while things had slowed, it was still busy. Essentially, we took calls from persons and groups wanting to know how they could help and also took calls from the ICP when they had requests for resources. It would then be our job to get those resources to them in Parkersburg.

Operating an EOC takes a lot of equipment and fortunately we've been able to acquire most of it through Homeland Security grants. Other equipment will be obtained as funding or grants allow. I'm also working with Alissa to identify other equipment that exists in the Courthouse that could be used in the event the EOC needs to be activated.

This spring and summer will bring a few training opportunities for EOC operations. First, in April, we'll be hosting the 16-counties in District 3 as we hold a 2-day EOC Operations course. Then in June we will be participating with other counties in four different states in the "Vigilant Guard" exercise put on by the National Guard. The week following that we'll be participating in a regional Public Health exercise; all of these taking place to make sure Dickinson County is as prepared as possible to handle a disaster and provide the quickest, most efficient response and recovery

**IT update** (from Alissa Julius): The spam filter has been changed. The county is currently using MXLogic. The new filter has been working for about a month and to this point the change has been a very positive. There have been no complaints of good emails being blocked as before when there were several good emails being blocked each day.

Over the past month Alissa has noticed that Courthouse was using up a large amount of bandwidth. The County firewall offers a variety of reports that helps to track down where usage is occurring. A few sites that seem to be non-work related have been blocked to see if that will help with response times. Already the Treasurer is reporting that their office transmissions are running quite a bit faster.

**Recycling:** Clark reported that the Courthouse recycling efforts have reduced the actual garbage going to the landfill by 50%. Thanks everyone!

