

OCONTO COUNTY



a place for you

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NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH - 2013

April is National County Government Month. This provides a perfect opportunity to provide the taxpayers information on the services and programs provided by Oconto County. This information will be broken out by department with a summary at the beginning and at the end.

COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

Oconto County provides a vast array of services to the public. These essential services produce the quality of life that the residents of Oconto County deserve and expect. These services range from highway maintenance to traffic patrol to providing care for the elderly and disabled. Usually these services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Below is a list of those services and programs and the corresponding 2013 tax levy for that service/program. Also, I have indicated the taxes paid, totaling \$514.90, for those services/programs by someone owning a \$100,000 piece of property.

Services	2013 Total Tax Levy	Taxes Paid
1 SHERIFF	5,998,734	\$171.71
2 HUMAN SERVICES	5,000,000	\$143.12
3 HIGHWAY	3,250,754	\$93.05
4 COURTHOUSE MAINT.	728,620	\$20.86
5 TECHNOLOGY SERVICES	695,516	\$19.91
6 COUNTY LIBRARIES	503,993	\$14.43
7 COURTS	447,873	\$12.82
8 LAND INFORMATION	326,807	\$9.35
9 ZONING	303,419	\$8.69
10 EXTENSION/EDUCATION	280,282	\$8.02
11 OCEDC	277,022	\$7.93
12 FINANCE	256,886	\$7.35
13 CONTINGENCY	250,000	\$7.16

14	CHILD SUPPORT	229,656	\$6.57
15	DA/VICTIM WITNESS	218,548	\$6.26
16	ADMINISTRATION/HR	210,313	\$6.02
17	LAND CONSERVATION	203,492	\$5.82
18	COUNTY CLERK	203,262	\$5.82
19	COUNTY BOARD	197,800	\$5.66
20	INSURANCE/SAFETY/RISK MGT.	146,381	\$4.19
21	VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER	125,878	\$3.60
22	MEDICAL EXAMINER	94,492	\$2.70
23	CORPORATION COUNSEL	79,409	\$2.27
24	FORESTRY, PARKS, RECREATION	54,543	\$1.56
25	EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT	52,448	\$1.50
26	COMMISSION ON AGING	35,007	\$1.00
27	ELECTIONS	29,868	\$0.85
28	AIRPORT	20,966	\$0.60
29	LWR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	19,160	\$0.55
30	BAY LAKE REGIONAL PLANNING	17,468	\$0.50
31	YOUTH FAIR	10,400	\$0.30
32	HISTORICAL SOCIETY	9,991	\$0.29
33	SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER	3,275	\$0.09
34	State Apportionment Special Charges	1,777	\$0.05
35	RECYCLING	0	\$0.00
36	MAR-OCO	0	\$0.00
37	LAND RECORDS	0	\$0.00
38	REGISTER OF DEEDS	(362)	-\$0.01
39	S/A-Business Computer Exemption	(9,750)	-\$0.28
40	INTEREST ON INVESTMENTS	(136,000)	-\$3.89
41	COUNTY TREASURER	(422,504)	-\$12.09
42	S/A-State Shared Revenue	(583,542)	-\$16.70
43	FUNDS APPLIED	(1,143,896)	-\$32.74
	TOTAL LEVY	17,987,986	\$514.90

The total 2012 County tax levy collected is \$17,987,986. This represents taxes collected from all county taxpayers, including the above taxpayer who paid \$514.90, for County services. This amount does not include school, state or municipality taxes.

This is a part of a series of informational articles on the services and programs provided by Oconto County.

COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Sheriff Department accounts for \$0.333 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$171.71 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Sheriff Department. Those services include:

- 911 Dispatch – provides a central calling center to request assistance or report certain situations. They then dispatch the necessary personnel or emergency service to respond to citizen requests. In 2012, they received 17,767 (17,038 calls in 2011), which generated 23,526 requests for county and municipal law enforcement, 2,811 for EMS and 2,071 for fire services.
- Road Patrol – provides various services to the traveling public, enforces traffic regulations, investigates citizen complaints, and responds to emergencies. In 2012, they responded to 11,479 complaints, compared to 11,445 in 2011.
- Investigations – provides response to all major crime scenes and conducts follow-up investigations and reports to judicial systems.
- Corrections – provides oversight of the incarceration of individuals awaiting trial or found guilty by the court system. In Oconto County, we have both an Adult and Juvenile Correctional facility. In 2012, they booked 1721 adults and 222 juveniles, compared to 1579 adults and 186 juveniles in 2011.
- Court Security – provide security for circuit court system to maintain order.
- Civil Process – provides persons notification that a case has been filed against them. In 2012, there were 1299 civil processes served, compared to 1516 in 2011.
- Administration – provides coordination of all of the above services.

The Sheriff Department consists of 64 dedicated county employees (9 in 911 Dispatch, 13 in Road Patrol, 2 in K9, 1 in Recreation Enforcement, 4 in Investigations, 25 in Corrections, 1 in Court Security, and 10 in Administration) providing for a safe environment for the citizens of Oconto County 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Does the taxpayer receive \$171.71 worth of services from the Sheriff Department each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Sheriff Department is \$5,998,734.

In my next article, I will discuss the Health & Human Services Department.

If you have any questions or concerns about this article or any other questions or concerns about Oconto County, please contact Kevin Hamann, County Administrative Coordinator at (920) 834-6811 or kevin.hamann@co.oconto.wi.us.

COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY MONIES WORTH?

The Oconto County Health and Human Services Department accounts for \$0.278 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$143.12 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Health and Human Services Department. Those services include:

- Economic Support – W-2, Badger Care Plus, Food Share, Employment and Training Services, Child Day Care, Low-income Energy Assistance, Child Day care Assistance, plus fraud investigation. In 2012, food share benefits, medical assistance and W-2 were provided to over 3000 families and energy assistance to over 2100 families.
- Child/Family Services – Child abuse and neglect, foster care, juvenile court, restitution, group home, institutional, youth aids, custody studies, referral and consultation, case management, community education, prevention and crisis intervention. In 2012, the agency received 501 reports of child abuse/neglect. In 2012, the agency received 145 juvenile court referrals.
- Community Services – Adult protective services, adult-at-risk investigation, protective placement/guardianship, adult family home administration, children and adult long-term support, case management/service coordination for the elderly and disabled, psychiatric services, psychological services, outpatient mental health and alcohol/drug services, OWI assessments, community support services for severe and persistent mental illness, court-ordered commitment services, family court mediation, information and referral, crisis intervention, and family support. In 2012, these programs served over 900 people.
- Vocational Services for Developmentally Disabled – Sheltered workshop, placement services, supported employment, benefits counseling, day services, pre-vocational services, vocational testing, and case management. In 2012, these programs served approximately 450 individuals.
- Public Health – Immunizations, communicable disease control, health promotion and disease prevention, injury prevention, public health preparedness, support to families with special needs children. In 2012, 147 child passenger safety seats were inspected (185 in 2010);

122 special needs children received support (127 in 2010); and 382 communicable diseases were reported and investigated (265 in 2010).

The Health and Human Services Department consists of 71 dedicated county employees providing for or arranging social, financial, medical, and emotional support to the people of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$143.12 worth of services from the Health and Human Services Department each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Health and Human Services Department is \$5,000,000.

In my next article, I will discuss the Highway Department.

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The Oconto County Highway Department accounts for \$0.181 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$93.05 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Highway Department. Those services include:

- General Maintenance – Patching, crack filling and seal coating of pavement, shoulder maintenance and vegetation control, bridge and culvert maintenance, litter pickup, guard rail installation and maintenance, signing, pavement marking and traffic control.
- Winter Maintenance – Plowing State and County Trunk highways, shoveling of bridges, and application of salt to State and County Trunk highways and bridges.
- Roadside Maintenance – Cleaning and maintaining the buildings and grounds at each wayside facility.
- Roadway Construction - Road construction, pavement resurfacing (black topping), bridge repair, culvert repair and installation and gravel crushing.

All the above mentioned services are available to Towns, Cities, and Villages upon request. To effectively perform these activities, storage maintenance and repair facilities are operated at Mountain, Oconto, Sampson and Suring locations.

The Highway Department maintains 477 lane miles of State roads, 624 lane miles of County roads, and 954 lane miles of town roads for winter maintenance. This totals almost 2055 lane miles to maintain.

The Highway Department consists of 52 dedicated full time county employees and 13 summer help employees in providing for the safety and convenience of the traveling public, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Does the taxpayer receive \$93.05 worth of services from the Highway Department each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Highway Department is \$3,250,754.

In my next article, I will discuss the Maintenance Department.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY MONIES WORTH?

The Oconto County Maintenance Department accounts for \$0.041 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$20.86 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Maintenance Department. Those services include:

- General Maintenance – Provides general maintenance, care and repair of the Courthouse Complex and grounds, jail facility, and provides assistance for the Beyer Home.
- Operations – Funds the operation of the Courthouse facility, including utility costs. In 2012, utility costs were \$172,225.63.
- County Building Projects – Provides technical assistance to various departments on building and renovation projects.
- Janitorial – Oversees contracted janitorial services to ensure a clean facility. In 2012, janitorial services cost \$66,075.60

The Maintenance Department consists of 4 dedicated county employees providing for a clean and attractive looking Courthouse for the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$20.86 worth of services from the Maintenance Department each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Maintenance Department is \$728,620.

In my next article, I will discuss the Technology Services Department.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY MONIES WORTH?

The Oconto County Technology Services Department accounts for \$0.039 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. A taxpayer owning a \$100,000 property paid \$19.91 in property taxes to Oconto County for services provided by the Technology Services Department. These services include:

- Programming & Project Management – Provides computer programming design and maintenance for multiple county programs used to provide and manage many of our county services. Provides Technical project management for various county projects.
- Web & Email Services – Accommodate county residents and visitors by providing and supporting multiple web servers that offer information and provide services to the general public via the internet such as tax, assessment and deeds information, survey records, parks & campgrounds. Provide email hosting for all county departments.
- Hardware & Software– Provide and configure standard hardware (computers, network equipment, printers, copiers/faxes, etc.). Provide, configure and maintain mobile computers for remote users such as squad cars. Purchase, deploy and administer software licenses for all county departments.
- Software Support – Support and administer many software packages which pertain to each departments mission.
- Maintenance – Provide coordination and maintenance of all computer and network hardware and software to all county departments. In 2013 there were approximately 325 computers in Oconto County. Maintained 20+ physical and virtual servers and a Storage area network which data is stored on and programs are run from. Maintained local and wide area computer network connectivity spanning 10+ buildings within the county via high speed wired/wireless connections and connectivity to the State of Wisconsin. Provide support and maintenance of various application programs used by departments such as financial, public safety, land management, & Human Services. Maintain e-mail, gateway, network printing, disaster recovery and other solutions for the county.
- Telephone & Cellular Services – Provide, support and administer voice over internet protocol (VOIP) phone services to all Courthouse, New View, and Oconto Highway departments. Administer all cellular

services, such as cell phones, data cards, and smart phones, for Oconto County.

- Other – Provides technology consulting, network & computer security, research, training and help desk services to all county departments.

The Technology Services Department consists of 5 dedicated county employees providing for the technology needs of Oconto County 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Does the taxpayer receive \$19.91 worth of services from the Technology Services Department each year? I hope you answer yes; I certainly would. The total 2011 tax levy for the Technology Services is \$695,516.

In my next article, I will discuss the County Libraries.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Library System accounts for \$0.028 of every county tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$14.43 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Library System. Those Libraries are:

- Oconto (Farnsworth) – In 2013, Oconto County provided \$94,199 to subsidize the operations of this library.
- Oconto Falls - In 2013, Oconto County provided \$93,209 to subsidize the operations of this library.
- Gillett - In 2013, Oconto County provided \$27,152 to subsidize the operations of this library.
- Suring - In 2013, Oconto County provided \$37,223 to subsidize the operations of this library.
- Lakewood (Lakes County) - In 2013, Oconto County provided \$59,663 to subsidize the operations of this library.
- Lena - In 2013, Oconto County provided \$32,147 to subsidize the operations of this library.
- Library Services Board - In 2013, Oconto County provided \$4,000 to pay for the operations of the Board and marketing efforts.

The Libraries also receive tax levy from the individual municipalities. In those municipalities, those residents do not pay the county tax listed above.

The Library System consists of 6 libraries throughout Oconto County providing for convenient and effective access to high quality library services to the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$14.43 worth of services from the Library System each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 county tax levy for the Libraries is \$503,993.

In my next article, I will discuss the Court System.

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The Oconto County Court System accounts for \$0.025 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$12.82 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Court System. Those services include:

- Circuit Court – Provides the trial court of general jurisdiction, and the highest court in the County for both civil and criminal cases.
- Clerk of Courts – Disburses all funds generated from fines, costs and filing fees, and answers all incoming phone calls. Intakes and processes all documents which includes assigning file numbers, file stamping all documents, docketing and filing, draws and notifies jury, pulls and then files away all files for court. Court Deputies clerk the court (takes minutes, swears in witnesses, marks exhibits), handles criminal, civil, traffic, small claims and passports. Prepares records for the Court of Appeals. Files and maintains all family court files (included paternities) and orders.
- Family Court – Provides County residents and the court system with high-quality family court, court commissioner and director of family mediation services as prescribed by state statute.
- Register in Probate – Maintains all records for the Court, prepares records for the Court of Appeals and advises the Director of State Courts of all record statistics receipts the necessary fees and disburses them accordingly. Additionally, issues orders for hearings and takes testimony of witnesses under oath for proof of heirship and wills. The Probate Court Commissioner is responsible for uncontested probate proceedings. Attorneys and public are advised by the Department regarding probate matters and changes regarding estates, trusts, and guardianships. The Department also audits and approves/disapproves all guardianship, conservatorship and trust annual accountings. The Department manages the annual protective placement reviews, maintains the retention of certain court records.

The Court System consists of 10 dedicated county employees and 4 State employees providing a judicial system for the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$12.82 worth of services from the Court System each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Court System is \$447,873.

In my next article, I will discuss the Land Information Department.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY MONIES WORTH?

The Oconto County (LIS) Land Information Systems Department accounts for \$0.018 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$9.35 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Land Information Systems Department. Those services include:

- Surveying – Maintains the PLSS (Public Land Surveyor System), in which all properties are based, this also includes annually working with all 29 municipalities to assure the preservation of these PLSS section corners and land ownership monuments that may become endangered of being destroyed due to construction and development. Provides the base mapping and control for all parcel mapping and GIS (Geographic Information System) applications. Reviews and approves survey maps to make certain that they comply with the Oconto County Land Division Ordinance. Provides technical assistance to other county departments, municipalities on land ownership and land location issues.
- Physical Addressing – Provides for the uniform rural numbering system through- out Oconto County. Continually updates the physical address maps and on an annual basis provides revised maps to all municipalities for fire, rescue and emergency services. Coordinates with the Sheriff's Department any address numbering discrepancies and new road locations. Works with all municipalities to coordinate road naming and any changes necessary to alleviate any confusion or discrepancies that may exist.
- Property Listing – Maintains accurate lists and descriptions for all parcels (approximately 44,000 parcels) of real property and also personal property in the county, which are subject to tax and those exempt from such tax. Also provides lists, maps, and descriptions for the use of assessors, municipal officials, and the general public. Reviews all new parcels to assure they comply with applicable land division regulations. Receives both electronic and hardcopy files from Assessors for uploads to the tax program. Prints and mails the tax bills for all the municipalities in Oconto County.
- Tax Deed – Provides the statutory duty of acquiring any tax delinquent property within Oconto County, and every year conducts a land sale of these unredeemed parcels.
- Land Records/ GIS (Geographic Information System) –Prepares and manages grants for WLIP (Wisconsin Land Information Program) funded projects along with retained fees. Provides oversight of collection and coordination of all county related GIS information such

as soils, wetlands, orthophotography, hydrology, LiDAR (contours), zoning, PLSS (Public Land Survey System), parcels, census mapping, supervisory and school district mapping, etc. of which are used to create reference maps along with data bases for tabulations in generating reports, maps, and other planning tools for other departmental studies. Actively supports the orthophotography, mapping and data base portion of the Oconto County Sheriff's Department E-911 dispatch system.

In addition this division also creates specific boundaries (shape files) for the Emergency Management program Code Red calling system.

- SOLO (Search Oconto County Land Information Online) Maintains, updates and adds land information to the Oconto County GIS web site that is technologically supported by the Technical Information Department.
- Plat Books – Coordinates the development of the official Oconto County Plat Book.

The Land Information Department consists of 7 dedicated full time county employees providing for the preservation of land records for the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$9.35 worth of services from the Land Information Systems Department each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Land Information Systems Department is \$326,807.

In my next article, I will discuss the Planning & Zoning Department.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Planning and Zoning and Solid Waste Department accounts for \$0.017 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$8.69 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Planning and Zoning and Solid Waste Department. Those services include:

- Planning and Zoning – Administers various ordinances controlling land use and regulation. These ordinances include the areas of General Zoning, Floodplain, Shoreland Protection, Sanitary, Land Division, Non-metallic Mining, and Comprehensive Land Use Planning. The purpose of the ordinances is to provide for the orderly use of land, the conservation of natural resources, to control the location of unavoidable nuisance producing uses, to conserve the value of land and buildings in Oconto County and to provide protection against fire, explosion, noxious fumes and other hazards in the interest of the public health, safety and general welfare.
- Solid Waste (Recycling) – Oversees the county-wide recycling program, including the collection and processing of recyclables and providing information and education to all interested parties. The department works with 24 municipal drop off centers that conveniently provide for the recycling of household items that would normally end up in a landfill. Recent changes to the program include the recycling of electronic items, CFL's and other fluorescent lights and used oil filters. This service receives no County tax dollars.

The Planning and Zoning and Solid Waste Department consist of 10 dedicated county employees providing for public health, safety and general welfare for the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$8.69 worth of services from the Planning and Zoning Department each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Planning/Zoning/Solid Waste Department is \$303,419.

In my next article, I will discuss the Wisconsin Extension Office.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County University of Wisconsin Extension Department accounts for \$0.016 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$8.02 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the UW Extension Department. Those services include:

- Programs in Agriculture and Natural Resources which help urban and rural people use research and knowledge to solve problems and take advantage of new opportunities. Educators balance farm profitability and production of high quality food, horticulture crops, fiber and plant material with protection of the natural environment.
- Family Living education to families throughout the life span, from improving prenatal nutrition and parenting skills to planning an estate and caring for an aging parent. Using research and education, staff collaborate with community organizations and state and local government officials to help them design public policies and programs that support families.
- 4-H and Youth Development Programs which give young people a chance to learn important skills, gain experience in teamwork and accountability and contribute to their communities. These programs utilize the effectiveness of citizens as volunteer adults and work with parents, schools, and other youth development agencies to provide hands on experiential opportunities to build our future workforce of scientists, engineers, and technology experts.
- Programs in Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development to help communities adopt environmentally and economically efficient practices related to land use, water quality, government operations and finance, and labor force issues. Our educators work with civic organizations, businesses, local government, and community leaders to help them identify critical local concerns, set goals and work on solutions.

Extension education extends well beyond simply sharing information. Backed by University of Wisconsin research, the local presence of faculty and staff here in Oconto County create access by all residents to the statewide cooperative extension network and to the entire UW System.

A unique partnership of counties, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Wisconsin funds UW-Extension. Oconto County UW-Extension maximizes the county's share of its overall budget by leveraging additional federal dollars which benefit Oconto County residents, such as the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program.

The UW Extension Department consists of 2 dedicated county employees and 9 State employees providing educational services for the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$8.02 worth of services from the UW Extension Department each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the University Extension Department is \$280,282.

In my next article, I will discuss the Oconto County Economic Development Corporation.

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Representatives of Oconto, Oconto Falls, Gillett, Suring, Lakewood and Oconto County created the Oconto County Economic Development Corporation (OCEDC) in 1977 to combat significant job losses experienced during the mid to late 1970's. The OCEDC has operated as the economic developments services provider since then and has expanded its role to include tourism promotion also on behalf of the County.

OCEDC consists of a volunteer Board of Directors representing business, industry, Oconto County, and every local unit of government within Oconto County, along with three dedicated employees providing for the citizens of Oconto County.

The County continues to contract with the OCEDC for economic development services in a cooperative program with cities, towns, and villages, and for county-wide tourism promotion. This accounts for \$0.015 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$7.93 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from OCEDC. Those services include:

Economic Development Services

- Business retention and expansion programs
- Industrial recruitment
- Development assistance for special projects as requested by local units of government
- Management of the Oconto County and Tri-County Business Development Revolving Loan Funds, which are used to expand businesses and create jobs. During 2012, four projects were initiated or completed that have leveraged over approximately \$1,300,000 in Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) loans, over \$30,000,000 in private investment, and will create or retain over 300 jobs.
- Managed the Community Development Zone tax credit program for new job development. A total of five companies in Oconto County have taken advantage of this program investing \$11,198,020, which attracted \$716,000 in tax credits and impacted 202 jobs.
- Assisted four Oconto County industries attract \$5,301,000 in Enterprise Development Zone Tax Credits which led to creation of 1,015 new jobs.
- Represent Oconto County in the collaborative, 13-county, North East Wisconsin Economic Partnership (NEWREP), which managed the Technology Development Zone tax credit program for businesses and industries that create jobs using new technologies. A total of \$4,771,970 in tax credits were used by 23 businesses and industries

that invested \$240,003,678 and created 821 new jobs and retained 1,765 jobs in Northeast Wisconsin.

- OCEDC participates as a partner with the NewNorth and Grow North regional economic development organizations.
- Assistance to local communities for special project development, grant writing, and grant administration. Examples of these services include but are not limited to, grants to build water towers, infrastructure improvements, municipal buildings and fire house construction, and Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts.
- Develop and maintain the Economic Development portion of the newly redesigned <http://www.ocontocounty.org> website.
- Assisted the City of Gillett in being designated by the Wis. Economic Development Corp. as one of 20 Connect Communities.
- Completed the 2013-2014 OCEDC Strategic Plan and Work Plan which resulted in the first two year operating contract with Oconto County.
- Completed a hotel/motel feasibility market study for the County.

Tourism Promotion Services

In 1997, Oconto County requested that OCEDC create a process that would organize various community entities across Oconto County to promote the tourism assets within Oconto County. When Oconto County began tourism promotion tourism expenditures by visitors to Oconto County were less than \$25 million annually. Within three years, expenditures by Oconto County visitors exceeded \$45 million, and continued to increase to over \$70.5 million. With the economic downturn tourism expenditures in Oconto County dropped, but have remained ahead of neighboring counties. In 2011 (most recent data available), tourism expenditures in the County increased by 8.45% (from 2010), which is a significantly larger increase than most of the other counties in the region. These increased visitor expenditures have resulted in substantial sales tax revenue which Oconto County uses to offset the property tax levy.

Tourism promotion services provided by OCEDC include:

- Development and publication of the award winning *Oconto County Discovery Guide* as a self funded tourism destination marketing magazine. The Discovery Guide was completely redesigned for 2013.
- Production of a mobile application for Android and Apple cell phones that will greatly increase the promotion of tourism assets in Oconto County.
- Participate in a 12-county consortium of the Wisconsin Counties Association, called the North Central International Trade and Economic Development Council (ITBEC), in marketing Northeast and North Central Wisconsin at recreation shows, via the website www.northcentralwisconsin.com on the internet, and in print marketing.
- Promote Oconto County at sport, recreation, and vacation shows in cooperation with area Chambers of Commerce and Business

Associations, and communities, Wisconsin Department of Tourism, and ITBEC

- Procured Ready, Set, Go grants from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism to assist in promoting two professional walleye tournaments in Oconto County. The tournaments bring hundreds of people into the County from around the country and generate millions in local spending to assist the economy.
- Developed and maintain the Tourism portion of the newly redesigned web site, <http://www.ocontocounty.org>, which includes web pages devoted to snowmobiling, ATV/UTV riding, and various other trail uses.
- Past efforts of Oconto County Tourism that still reap benefits for Oconto County residents and businesses include, the book *From the McCauslin to Jab Switch, A History of Logging in Oconto County*; ten episodes of *Fishing the Midwest with Bob Jensen* that featured Oconto County; four episodes of *Discover Wisconsin* that featured Oconto County communities, snowmobiling, and ATV riding.

Does the taxpayer receive \$7.93 worth of services from OCEDC each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for OCEDC economic development and tourism promotion and development services is \$277,022.

In my next article, I will discuss the Finance Department.

If you have any questions or concerns about this article, or any other questions or concerns about Oconto County, please contact Kevin Hamann, County Administrative Coordinator at (920) 834-6811 or kevin.hamann@co.oconto.wi.us.

This is a part of a series of informational articles on the services and programs provided by Oconto County.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Finance Department accounts for \$0.014 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$7.35 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Finance Department. Those services include:

- Establish county-wide uniform policies in financial procedures, financial reporting, accounting methods, payroll procedures, and budget preparation.
- Provide debt administration, cash management, and investment policies.
- Develop data information required for bond issuance and debt reduction.
- Responsible for all county, state and federal financial reports, budgets, financial analysis and studies of revenues, expenditures, assets, liabilities and equities.
- Coordinate, maintain, and review all existing and new financial and accounting systems; recommend changes in accounting methods and systems; supervise installation of new accounting systems and procedures.
- Establish fiscal policies of the county to insure uniform operation; review, develop, and recommend long-range fiscal, financial, and information systems.
- Supervise and process the central accounting, payroll, and cash management services for all departments.
- Plan, organize, and supervise all budget preparation activities.
- Conduct internal audits upon request of the Finance Committee and/or County Board.

The Finance Department consists of 2 dedicated county employees providing for governmental financial services for the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$7.35 worth of services from the Finance Department each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Finance Department is \$256,886.

In my next article, I will discuss the Child Support Agency.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Child Support Agency accounts for \$0.013 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$6.57 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Child Support Agency. Those services include:

The Child Support Agency works with several different types of action including: paternity establishment, support and maintenance cases (separated without a divorce), Kinship Care cases and Foster Care/Substitute Care referrals, and in-coming and out-going UIFSA, medical support order enforcement, and revisions of judgments. The Child Support program was created by Congress in 1975. They assist Non- public aid assisted families with the same consideration as public aid assisted families. The Child Support Agency represents the State of Wisconsin in the best interests of the child/children.

As a result of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, effective in October 2007, the Federal Government cut funding to local child support agencies' throughout the nation. Oconto County received a \$266, 000 reductions in funding. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act temporarily restored the federal funding for a two year period, from October 2008 to September 2010. Once again Oconto County had to provide additional county tax dollars to balance the child support agencies budget.

The Child Support Agency consists of 5 dedicated county employees providing for establishment and enforcement of child support orders for families for the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$6.57 worth of services from the Child Support Agency each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2011 tax levy for the Child Support Agency is \$229,656.

In my next article, I will discuss the District Attorney's Office.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County District Attorney's Office accounts for \$0.012 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$6.26 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the District Attorney's Office. Those services include:

The District Attorney, a constitutionally mandated office that is filled by election every two years, heads the department. Until the late 1980's, all staff within the District Attorney's Office was county employees. Through legislative changes, the District Attorney and Assistant District Attorneys are all state employees. The support staff remains as county employees.

The District Attorney enforces, through prosecution, the criminal laws of the state of Wisconsin with Oconto County. In addition, laws are enforced relating to children and delinquency as well as a variety of civil offenses including conservation, boating, and traffic.

Included in the District Attorney's Office is the Victim Witness Office which provides services to Victims and Witness of Crimes. Some of the services include notice of rights, how to exercise those rights, information regarding Criminal Justice Procedures; and referrals to Community & Government resources. The Victim Witness Office also works to assure that victims' and witnesses' rights are being provided by law enforcement agencies, the Court, Prosecutors (DA), and other agencies involved in the criminal justice system.

The District Attorney's Office & Victim Witness Office consists of 4 dedicated county employees and 2 state employees providing for the prosecution of criminal laws for the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$6.26 worth of services from the District Attorney's Office each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2011 tax levy for the District Attorney's Office is \$218,548.

In my next article, I will discuss the Administrative Coordinator's Office.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Administrative Coordinator's Office accounts for \$0.012 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$6.02 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Administrative Coordinator Office. Those services include:

- Administrative Coordinator – Assists in the administration and coordination of all countywide functions, providing services to the County Board, County Board Committees, County Committees, Boards and Commissions, Elected Officials, Appointed Officials and Department Heads.
- Human Resources Director – Assists in employee recruitment/selection, employee and labor relations, wage and salary administration, employee development, employee records, and affirmative action. Participates in and coordinates labor negotiations, recruitments, selection, placements, transfer, and removal of employees. Additionally, major responsibilities of this department include developing the countywide personnel system, personnel policies and procedures, central and complete personnel files, updating the county's compliance programs and providing guidance on all personnel matters.
- Risk Manager – The Administrative Coordinator is responsible for risk management/loss control and evaluates all insurance needs and recommends appropriate coverage's.
- County Board – Develops and proposes for the County Board consideration, policy initiative to strengthen county government, and to implement laws, County ordinances, resolutions, County policies, budget and procedures.

The Administrative Coordinator's Office consists of 2 dedicated county employees providing for coordinating all administrative and management functions of county government for the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$6.02 worth of services from the Administrative Coordinator's Office and Negotiations each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Administrative Coordinator's Office and Negotiations is \$210,313.

In my next article, I will discuss the Land Conservation Department.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Land Conservation Department (LCD) accounts for \$0.011 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$5.82 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Land Conservation Department. Those services include:

- Assists the Land Conservation Committee in developing annual and long range planning and prepares LCD annual report and other reports as directed by the Land Conservation Committee (LCC).
- Seeks all local, state and federal funding possible on behalf of the LCC, completes grant applications, and if received, accounts for all expenditures.
- Administers the Farmland Preservation Program, insuring all program requirements for soil erosion planning and compliance are met.
- Assist the Natural Resource Conservation Service deliver Federal programs such as EQIP, WHIP and CRP with over \$895,288 in cost share funds.
- Administers the Targeted Resource Management Grant Program with applying for cost share funds for landowners.
- Administers the Great Lakes Restoration Incentive Grant program with over \$281,526 in funds.
- Administers the State Soil and Water Resource Funds \$20,000 cost shared to landowners throughout the county.
- Administers County Cost Share program for Shoreline Restoration & Ag BMP's
- Assists and enforces farmers in meeting the New State Standards and Prohibitions.
- Designs and installs soil erosion control and water pollution abatements systems for farmers to meet the States Standards & Prohibitions and County AG Waste Ordinance requirements.
- Develops and coordinates an information and education program to promote the wise use of land, water, and related resources.
- Administers and enforces the Oconto County Animal Waste Ordinance.
- Assists local Lake Management Districts or Associations in grant application for protection or rehabilitation on inland lakes.
- Assists the Oconto County Zoning office with Lake Classification Grant & Shoreline Restoration.
- Administers the State Wildlife Damage Program to landowners with crop damage.
- Provides soils information and interpretations and/or performs on-site soil investigations for land users, realtors, students, and units of government.

- Provides liaison for the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), relays requests and information between LCC, DATCP and WDNR

The Land Conservation Department consists of 4 dedicated county employees providing for county land conservation programs for the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$5.82 worth of services from the Land Conservation Department each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Land Conservation Department is \$203,492.

In my next article, I will discuss is the County Clerks Office and Elections

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Clerk's Office and Elections accounts for \$0.013 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$6.67 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the County Clerk's Office. Those services include:

- Elections – The County Clerk is responsible for the administration of county, state and national elections to include: publishing notices, filing nomination papers, preparation of ballots, tabulating returns and maintaining records; Assists with coordination of elections on municipal and school district level to meet State statutory requirements, encouraging uniformity in the use of electronic voting systems. Provides Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) services. In 2012 the County received \$9,900 from 17 municipalities per agreement, to provide SVRS services.
- Licensing – The County Clerk's office sells fish and game licenses for the State of WI with the implementation of DNR Automated License Issuance System; processes registrations, renewals and transfers for ATVs, Boats, and Snowmobiles; and is responsible for remittance to the State and record keeping. County Clerks have been responsible for issuing marriage licenses since they were first required in Wisconsin in 1899. Upon meeting statutory criteria, a marriage license may be issued in Oconto County for a \$60 fee. The State of WI receives \$25; and the County Family Mediation account receives \$20 for each license issued. In the year 2012, a total of 183 marriage licenses were issued. The County Clerk's Office assists and coordinates the municipal activity in the collection of dog tax. Licenses and tags are received by the Clerk's Office and distributed to municipal treasurers, along with forms for same from the State Dept. of Ag, Trade & Consumer Protection. The State receives 5% of the minimum dog tax collected, which in the year 2012 a total of \$16,695 was collected by Municipal Treasurers with the State receiving \$835. The remainder is used to pay for expenses and forms (\$843), and dog damage claims (which there were zero) in 2012. Any excess amount above \$1,000 at the end of the year is disbursed proportionately back to the municipalities. In 2012, \$13,133 was paid out to municipalities.
- Permits and other functions – A variety of permits are issued by the County Clerk's Dept. including timber cutting permits; sale of County plat books; compilation of Official County Directory annually and sales of same.
- Record keeping – The County Clerk serves the County Board by taking minutes, insure payment of county obligations, assuring compliance of open meeting laws and maintaining files of records for the County Board and the citizens of the county; maintains file of Probate Claims

Notices; State and County Highway records, Farmland Preservation Applications files, contracts, leases and agreements of the County, oaths, bonds and applications.

The County Clerk's Office consists of 3 dedicated county employees performing services for the public including conducting of elections, issuing and distribution of certain licenses and providing general information for the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$6.67 worth of services from the County Clerk's Office each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the County Clerk's Office, including the cost of elections for the County, is \$203,492.

In my next article, I will discuss the County Board.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Board accounts for \$0.011 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$5.66 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the County Board.

The organization for Oconto County also includes various County Board Standing Committees that oversee the various County Departments. Those standing Committees include:

- Economic Development and Tourism
- Emergency Management
- Extension Education
- Finance/Insurance
- Health and Human Services
- Highway
- Technology Services
- Land and Water Resources Management
- Law Enforcement/Judiciary
- Personnel and Wages
- Public Property

As the governing body for Oconto County, the Board is responsible for planning and provision of services related to public needs as required by state and federal law including; adopting the annual budget, adopting county ordinances, setting policies, confirming appointments of most non-elected officials, and assisting citizens in solving problems and addressing local concerns.

The Oconto County Board consists of 31 dedicated county supervisors providing for the legislative and executive oversight of all County operations for the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$5.66 worth of services from the Oconto County Board each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the County Board is \$197,800.

In my next article, I will discuss the Veterans Service Office.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Veterans Service Department accounts for \$0.007 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$3.60 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Veterans Service Department. Those services include:

The Veterans Service Office aims to aid veterans, their dependents and beneficiaries in securing the wide range of benefits to which they are entitled. The office assists in obtaining benefits by:

- 1) Advising and counseling persons on benefits available through the Veterans Administration both State and Federal.
- 2) Filing appropriate claim forms with benefit agencies.
- 3) Obtaining necessary supporting evidence and public records.
- 4) Follow-up and maintenance of files.
- 5) Outreach Programs (Gillett, Mountain, Lakewood/Townsend area).
- 6) Home/Nursing home visits as necessary.

The office administers the County Veteran Service Commission fund to provide aid to the needy veterans, in addition to budgetary funds for the care of veterans graves, ordering of headstones and indigent burial allowances. The office also provides information and referral as necessary to assist in obtaining benefits from other resources and / or governmental agencies. Arrangements are also made and transportation provided for medical attention to VA hospitals. Attend local veteran's group meetings to disseminate current policy information.

The Veterans Service Department consists of 2 dedicated county employees providing provide assistance to persons who served in the U.S. Armed Forces and their dependents and widows / widowers on all matters pertaining to benefits available to them.

Does the taxpayer receive \$3.60 worth of services from the Veterans Service Department each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Veterans Service Department is \$125,878.

In my next article, I will discuss the Medical Examiner's Office.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Medical Examiner's Office accounts for \$0.005 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$2.70 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Medical Examiner's Office. Those services include:

- Death investigations - the Medical Examiner's office is part of a multi-disciplinary team (including law enforcement agencies and District Attorney's office), which investigates, determines cause and manner of death and if necessary prosecutes cases where death is suicidal, accidental, homicidal, unexplained, unusual, suspicious, sudden, or those where a physician can not or will not certify a death certificate. In these cases, the deceased is under the sole jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner, who carries out all procedures necessary at the scene and thereafter, to maintain the integrity of the investigation.
- Record Keeping - records and reports obtained and/or produced will be maintained in both paper forms as well as electronic. These records are available to those who have direct and tangible interest as determined by the Medical Examiner. If necessary this documentation will be provided to the District Attorney for prosecution as required by law. The Medical Examiner, and the experts working for the Medical Examiner, testifies in court as necessary.
- Cremations and disinterment - require authorization by the Medical Examiner. In the case of cremation, this disposition may not be allowed if investigation finds the cause of death to be undetermined or homicide. The case of disinterment, legality of the request must be ascertained prior to authorization

Oconto County contracts with Brown County for administration of the Medical Examiner's Office. In addition too the Brown County Medical Examiner, we have 5 dedicated part-time on-call county employees whom provide death investigation expertise for the citizens of Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$2.70 worth of services from the Medical Examiner's Office each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Medical Examiner's Office is \$94,492.

In my next article, I will discuss the Corporation Counsel's Office.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Corporation Counsel accounts for \$0.004 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$2.27 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Corporation Counsel. Those services include:

- Prosecution - Prosecute and defend all civil actions involving Oconto County.
- Legal Advice - Give advice to the County Board and all departments. Review all contracts and draft contracts, when directed, that involve the county. Draft resolutions, ordinances and county code revisions, when directed to do so.
- Child Support - Act as the Oconto County Child Support Enforcement Attorney and provide advice to the Oconto County Child Support Agency.

The Corporation Counsel consists of 2 dedicated county employees providing for legal services to Oconto County.

Does the taxpayer receive \$2.27 worth of services from the Corporation Counsel's Office each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Corporation Counsel's Office is \$79,409.

In my next article, I will discuss the Forestry & Parks Department.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Forestry & Parks Department accounts for \$0.003 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2011. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$1.56 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Forestry & Parks Department. Those services include:

- Forestry - The Oconto County Forest is composed of 43,556 acres, with 15 forest cover types comprising the commercial forest. The administrative offices are located in the Courthouse and the field headquarters are located on County Trunk N in Oconto. Timber contracts are sold twice a year allowing logging contractors the right to harvest forest products from county land. Major programs include: sale of timber contracts, an ongoing program of contract inspection to check for compliance, timber scaling to account for wood removed from the forest and billing and payment collection. Other major programs include: maintenance on approximately 35 miles of forest roads and property boundary lines, preparation of 30 acres for tree planting, machine and hand-planting of approximately 30,000 seedlings, herbicide and mechanical release of over 200 acres of oak regeneration sites, issuance of approximately 50 firewood permits annually, and insect control as needed. The Forestry Department also cooperates with the Department of Natural Resources in fish management, wildlife management, and forest fire protection programs.
- Parks - The Oconto County Parks Department operates 6 parks, 9 boat landings, cooperates with 2 cross country ski clubs / trails, bridal trail, 6 fishing facilities for those physically challenged, operates and maintains 8 dams, contracts for the maintenance of and inspects 426 miles of snowmobile trails and 82 miles of ATV trails. Oconto County Parks also cooperates in maintaining and operating 2 State Recreational Trails, the Nicolet State Trail from Gillett to Townsend and the Oconto River State Trail from Oconto to Stiles.
 - The 110 acre Chute Pond Park was established in 1935. The campground has 112 sites for tents and trailers and is open year round. Chute Pond has 600 acres of lake with a maximum depth of 15 feet, 4 miles of shoreline, public swimming, boat rental, good fishing, ice-bait-tackle, hiking trails, playground, showers, and flush toilets. Chute Pond Dam was built about 1852 to store water for logging drives down the Oconto River. In 1934-37 the old wooden chute dam was replaced with the present dam.

- The 85 acre North Bay Shore Park is located on Green Bay. It provides a 34 site campground with flush toilets, showers, pit toilets, all electrical sites, and boat landing for excellent fishing, playground, pavilion, volleyball, horseshoe, and basketball.

The County Forestry & Parks Department consists of 7 dedicated county employees (5 full time, 2 LTE and 1 contracted campground caretaker) The mission of the Oconto County Forestry Department is to promote the planned development and management of the county forest for optimum production of forest products, together with recreational opportunities, wildlife, and watershed protection, giving full recognition to the concept of multi-use for maximum public benefit. The mission of the Oconto County Parks Department is to provide recreational opportunities by developing, managing, and programming all park lands and trails. Also, promotes an appreciation, awareness, and understanding of the natural resources.

Does the taxpayer receive \$1.50 worth of services from the Forestry & Parks Department each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Forestry & Parks Department is \$54,543.

In my next article, I will discuss the Emergency Management Office.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Emergency Management/Safety Department accounts for \$0.003 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2011. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$1.50 in property taxes to Oconto County for services from the Emergency Management/Safety Department. Those services include:

- Emergency Management - Administers the County Emergency Management Plan and the County Emergency Priority Plan, which compliments the State of Wisconsin's endorsement of the Federal Integrated Emergency Management System concept. They are divided into sections which contain all-hazard functional components and hazard-specific operational preparedness, response and recovery, and were written by this office specifically for the purpose of carrying out its mission. Code Red
- HAZMAT -supports the Local Emergency Planning Committee in the preparation of the S.A.R.A title III hazardous material / toxic waste plan mandated by the Federal Government. This plan will be the basic document used by this office to carry out our mission of protecting the lives and properties of county residents from the hazards of chemical and/or toxic substances.
- Safety - Coordinates County safety program through implementation of the safety manual.

The Emergency Management/Safety Department consists of 2 dedicated county employees providing planning to protect the lives and properties of Oconto County residents during emergencies, both natural and man-made.

Does the taxpayer receive \$1.50 worth of services from the Emergency Management/ Safety Department each year? I hope you answer yes, I certainly would. The total 2013 tax levy for the Emergency Management/Safety Department is \$52,448.

In my next article, I will discuss the Register of Deeds Office.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Register of Deeds Office accounts for -0.000 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. What does a negative amount mean? For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, it means they saved \$0.01 in property taxes to Oconto County as a result of the services and fees from the Register of Deeds Office. Those services include:

- Records all documents authorized by law to be recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds. Reviews each document for compliance with statutory recording requirements. Collects a recording fee and also a transfer fee, if required. Indexes each document in a computerized grantor/grantee index, and enters each document containing a legal description in the tract index system. Scans documents for the county records, and maintains a website for online access to recorded documents. Makes available copies of daily recordings for tax listing purposes. Returns original documents as instructed. Makes and certifies copies of any record and collects statutory fee for same.
- Files, indexes and maintains military discharges. Makes and certifies copies, free of charge, that a veteran or dependent of a veteran may require applying for veterans benefits.
- Files and indexes all uniform commercial code instruments pertaining to fixtures on real estate.
- Maintains records of all births, deaths and marriages, and issue copies under statutory guidelines and fees.

The County Register of Deeds Office consists of 4 dedicated county employees providing timely, secure, accurate, archival, accessible and cost-effective record systems and services that are delivered in a prompt and courteous manner for the citizens of Oconto County.

In 2013, the Register of Deeds Office provides a savings to the tax levy in the amount of \$362.

In my next article, I will discuss the County Treasurer's Office

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

The Oconto County Treasurer's Office accounts for -\$0.023 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2011. What does a negative amount mean? For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, it means they saved \$12.09 in property taxes to Oconto County as a result of the services from the County Treasurer's Office. Those services include:

- Record Keeping - keeps records of all money's appropriated and disbursed regarding: General property taxes, bail, fines, or forfeitures imposed by the courts for violation of state laws or county / municipal ordinances
- Investing - safe-keeps all county funds and invests such funds consistent with state stature and direction of the County Board. In 2012, County earned \$133,795 in interest due to its investments and \$715,911 on interest on taxes.
- Tax Collection - maintains records of all transactions affecting current and delinquent taxes and foreclosures.

The County Treasurer's Office consists of 2 dedicated county employees providing for the orderly collection, disbursement, and recording of all money's received or disbursed by the county and with maintaining records of transactions affecting taxes and the safekeeping of all county funds for the citizens of Oconto County

In 2013, the Treasurer's Office provides a savings to the tax levy in the amount of \$422,504.

In my next article, I will discuss the City/County Airport, Commission on Aging, Bay Lakes Regional Planning Commission, Youth Fair and the Senior Citizens center.

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This is a part of a series of informational articles on the services and programs provided by Oconto County.

COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH

Oconto County, along with funding County Departments, also provides property tax funds to other agencies. Those include:

- Airport – In 2013, \$20,966 was appropriated to the Oconto City/County Airport to subsidize their operation to provide general aviation service to Oconto County. This costs \$0.60 for the taxpayer with a \$100,000 property.
- Commission on Aging – In 2013, \$35,077 was appropriated to this agency to subsidize their operation to provide meals and transportation to the elderly. This costs \$1.00 for the taxpayer with a \$100,000 property.
- Bay Lakes Regional Planning Commission – In 2013, \$17,458 was appropriated to subsidize their operation to provide planning services to Oconto County. This costs \$0.50 for the taxpayer with a \$100,000 property.
- Historical Society – In 2013, \$9,991 was appropriated to this agency to subsidize the operation of the Beyer Home Museum. This costs \$0.29 for the taxpayer with a \$100,000 property.
- Youth Fair – In 2013, \$10,400 was appropriated to this organization to subsidize the operation of its fair. This costs \$0.30 for the taxpayer with a \$100,000 property.
- Senior Citizens Center – In 2013, \$3,275 was appropriated to this agency to subsidize the operation of this facility in Oconto Falls. This costs \$0.05 for the taxpayer with a \$100,000 property.

These above agencies play an important role in providing the residents of Oconto County a better place to live and work.

In my next article, I'll discuss revenue received from the state and the contingency account.

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The County budget also includes other revenue and expenditures that are not directly related to any one department.

The County receives revenue from the State to help offset the property tax levy. This account for $-\$0.097$ of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. What does a negative amount mean? For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, it means they saved \$49.72 in property taxes to Oconto County as a result of the funding from the State and the County using some of the fund balance.

Those funding sources are:

- Shared Revenue Program – In 2013, we estimate to receive \$583,542 from the State. This offsets the taxes by \$16.70.
- Business Computers Exemption - In 2013, we estimates to receive \$9,750 from the State. This offsets the taxes by \$0.28.
- Funds Applied - In 2013 we used \$1,143,896 of our "savings account" to balance the budget. This offsets the taxes by \$32.74.

The County also retains a contingency budget each year for unforeseen expenditures or to set aside funds for expenditures that at the time the budget was adopted, we only had preliminary cost estimates. In 2013, we budgeted \$250,000 for the contingency budget. This accounts for \$0.014 of every tax dollar spent in Oconto County in 2013. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$7.16 in property taxes to Oconto County to create this contingency account.

The County also has an insurance budget. In 2013, \$146,381 was budgeted for insurance costs (liability, property, equipment breakdown, etc) that were not allocated to a specific department. This accounts for \$0.008 of every tax dollar spent. For a taxpayer with a \$100,000 property, they paid \$4.19 in property taxes to Oconto County for liability, property and other risk insurances.

In my next article, I'll summarize all of the services and programs provided by Oconto County.

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COUNTY SERVICES: DO I GET MY TAX MONEY'S WORTH?

Oconto County provides a vast array of services to the public. These essential services produce the quality of life that the residents of Oconto County deserve and expect. These services range from highway maintenance to traffic patrol to providing care for the elderly and disabled. Usually these services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

Services	Tax Levy	2013 Total Taxes Paid
1 SHERIFF	5,998,734	\$171.71
2 HUMAN SERVICES	5,000,000	\$143.12
3 HIGHWAY	3,250,754	\$93.05
4 COURTHOUSE MAINT	728,620	\$20.86
5 TECHNOLOGY SERVICES	695,516	\$19.91
6 COUNTY LIBRARIES	503,993	\$14.43
7 COURTS	447,873	\$12.82
8 LAND INFORMATION	326,807	\$9.35
9 PLANNING & ZONING	303,419	\$8.69
10 EXTENSION/EDUCATION	280,282	\$8.02
11 OCEDC	277,022	\$7.93
12 FINANCE	256,886	\$7.35
13 CONTINGENCY	250,000	\$7.16
14 CHILD SUPPORT	229,656	\$6.57
15 DA/VICTIM WITNESS	218,548	\$6.26
16 ADMINISTRATION/HR	210,313	\$6.02
17 LAND CONSERVATION	203,492	\$5.82
18 COUNTY CLERK	203,262	\$5.82
19 COUNTY BOARD	197,800	\$5.66
20 INSURANCE/SAFETY/RISK MGT	146,381	\$4.19
21 VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER	125,878	\$3.60
22 MEDICAL EXAMINER	94,492	\$2.70
23 CORPORATION COUNSEL	79,409	\$2.27
24 FORESTRY, PARKS, RECREATION	54,543	\$1.56
25 EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT	52,448	\$1.50

26	COMMISSION ON AGING	35,007	\$1.00
27	ELECTIONS	29,868	\$0.85
28	AIRPORT	20,966	\$0.60
29	LWR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	19,160	\$0.55
30	BAY LAKE REGIONAL PLANNING	17,468	\$0.50
31	YOUTH FAIR	10,400	\$0.30
32	HISTORICAL SOCIETY	9,991	\$0.29
33	SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER	3,275	\$0.09
34	State Apportionment Special Charges	1,777	\$0.05
35	RECYCLING	0	\$0.00
36	MAR-OCO	0	\$0.00
37	LAND RECORDS	0	\$0.00
38	REGISTER OF DEEDS	(362)	-\$0.01
39	S/A-Business Computer Exemption	(9,750)	-\$0.28
40	INTEREST ON INVESTMENTS	(136,000)	-\$3.89
41	COUNTY TREASURER	(422,504)	-\$12.09
42	S/A-State Shared Revenue	(583,542)	-\$16.70
43	FUNDS APPLIED	(1,143,896)	-\$32.74
	TOTAL LEVY	17,987,986	\$514.90

The total 2013 County tax levy collected is \$17,987,986. This represents taxes collected from all county taxpayers, including the above taxpayer who paid \$514.90, for County services. This amount does not include school, state or municipality taxes.

Over the series of these articles, I have briefly explained those above services and programs that Oconto County provides to the taxpayer. The purpose of these information articles was to allow you, the taxpayer, to decide whether you are getting your money's worth for the taxes you pay to Oconto County. For every \$1000 of equalized property value, a taxpayer pays \$5.15 for the services and programs provided by Oconto County.

As a taxpayer myself, I feel I'm getting my money's worth. Hopefully you will answer the same.

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