



## St. Joseph County 2017 Departmental Accomplishments

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The mission of St. Joseph County Government is to provide statutory and constitutional services in a fiscally responsible manner worthy of the dignity and respect of all County citizens.

Non-mandated services requested by citizens shall be evaluated and prioritized within the same context of fiscal responsibility and public trust. The basis for providing such services shall include, but not be restricted to: ***the safety and well-being of the public, the protection and improvement of natural resources, and the expansion of economic opportunities for all citizens.***

St. Joseph County Government as stewards of people and resources promotes equal opportunity for all, and hereby encourages the talents, creativity and leadership of all County employees in striving for prompt, courteous, respectful and efficient delivery of services.

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This document highlights the many successes and accomplishments of the various departments working diligently to make St. Joseph County a great place to live and work. St. Joseph County government includes approximately 33 departments and over 250 staff. Each department plays a central role in the success of our operations. These departments touch the lives of the people we serve each day as exemplified by the staff that work 24/7 at the County Jail, the Deputies on the road patrolling for our safety, and those helping our community's Veterans and Seniors. As stated in our mission, St. Joseph County strives to set the standard in public service.

## 2017 St. Joseph County Departmental Accomplishments

*This is not meant to be an exhaustive list as not all departments were able to respond.*

### Animal Control – Bradley D. Balk, Sheriff

- Added two play yards to Animal Control.
- Purchased 1.4 acres of land for future new Animal Control building.
- Updated office furniture and remodeled Animal Control to handle customers more efficiently.

### Building and Grounds – Director: Tim Hochstetler

- New floor covering in Annex I, Animal Control, and Historic Courthouse.
- Replaced all the cell locks in west wing of Jail.
- Resealed and striped several parking lots.
- Backup generator installed for the IT Department.

### Central Dispatch – Director: Dennis Brandenburg

- Went live with Smart 911 program.
- Upgraded the county-wide Weather Alert system.
- Replacement of CORE server.

### Circuit Court – Honorable Judge Paul Stutesman

- Increase of criminal cases; processed 719 felonies.
- Specialty Courts: Fifth year of Swift and Sure Probation and third year of Adult Drug Treatment Court.
- The 2017 annual visit from State Court Administrator's Office confirmed the court is a high performing court.

### College Access Network – Director: Tracy Harker

- Increased fafsa completion rates from 66.8% in 2016 to 79.6% in 2017.
- Increased senior application rates from 91.3% in 2016 to 94.8% in 2017.
- Met with every senior in County throughout the school year to get an idea of their plan after high school and help them get to that plan.
- Held Senior Information Nights to help parents and the students understand what steps need to take during their senior year.
- Participated in Parent Teacher Conferences.

### Commission on Aging – Director: Tim Stoll

- Implemented the St. Joseph County Legacy Project that preserves individual and County history by using local high school students as biographers for senior citizens.
- Secured the former Three Rivers Inn as a future site for a new senior center and senior housing community.
- Received a grant from the Kellogg 25 year club to serve breakfast bags to seniors in the community.
- Developed a volunteer guide to assist in recruiting volunteers.
- Increased COA membership from 3227 in 2016 to 3651 in 2017.
- Developed more fitness/wellness programs for seniors.

### Community Corrections – Director: Erin Goff

- Now offering the Economic Crime Education Program designed for first time or low level Retail Fraud 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree, Larceny and other theft offenses.
- Partnership with District Court resulted in a program grant for Sobriety Court.

### County Clerk – Lindsay Oswald

#### Clerk General Division:

- Selected and processed request for new voting equipment; successfully implemented new voting equipment during the November 2017 election.
- Implemented steps toward paperless CPL.

#### Clerk Circuit Court:

- Revised jury process for cost savings measures from 2016.
- Implemented steps toward OnBase for criminal cases.
- Implemented a system to email orders to save on postage.

#### Register of Deeds:

- Focused on improving customer services with excellent results.
- Added another e-recording vendor.
- Completed another phase of the online access.

### District Court – Honorable Judges Jeffrey Middleton and Robert Pattison

- OnBase Image Soft build-in development for entire District Court departments: Criminal, Civil, Traffic and Probation.
- Additional computer equipment installed to ease/prepare users for the OnBase experience.
- Juvenile Court Community Service joined with District Court to assist with a few clerical time consuming necessary tasks.

### Drain Commissioner – Jeffery Wenzel

- Maintained legal lake levels throughout the County.
- Issued 132 Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control permits.
- Obtained permit from MDEQ to trap beavers in established County drains.

### Emergency Management – Director: T. J. Baker

- Communication. Maintained radio equipment needed to provide interoperability during any type of disaster.
- Equipment. Maintained, acquired and placed emergency rescue equipment throughout the County to provide easy access during any type of disaster.
- Preparedness. Worked to prepare our community by speaking, hosting tabletop exercises and organizing full-scale drills with our schools, local government, private facilities and volunteer groups.
- EOP. Started to revamp our County's current Emergency Operation Plan (EOP).
- Outreach. Started Coffee & Cops, a quarterly Scam Awareness talk with our County's Commission on Aging.
- Mass Notification. Maintained the current NIXLE Mass Notification System and started to work toward the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).
- Volunteer Groups. Maintained and promoted current Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Damage Assessment and Amateur Radio Operator.
- Was certified as an ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate) Instructor.
- Received School Resource Officer Certification.

### Equalization – Deputy Director: Josh Simmons

- Met all statutory deadlines.
- Entered 4,041 different sales into Equalization software.
- Conducted 686 appraisals for Equalization studies.
- Conducted audits on 100 Personal Property statements.
- Assisted Treasurer's Office with balancing of tax rolls for 15 local units for both tax billing sessions.

### Friend of the Court – Director: William Thistlethwaite

- For the sixth year in a row, total collections were up; total for 2017 was \$10,395,535.00.
- First full year with Support to Employment Program (STEP) which had 46 referrals and 24 now employed and paying support.

### GIS – Director: Jerry Happel

- Researched, identified, calculated, and entered 1067 accurate geodetic coordinates for property controlling corners in the County. Manually repositioned an additional 1141 corners to better reflect believed actual location.
- Realigned all 28,408 County parcels to new corners, section, ½-section and ¼-section lines.
- Used realigned parcels to generate approximately 1000 new Tax Maps for the County and created and printed an all-new 2017 plat book.
- Assigned 111 new addresses within the County.
- Processed 179 parcel splits/combinations/corrections/transfer/boundary changes.

### Information Technology – Director: Dustin Bainbridge

- Upgraded the County's telephone system including replacement of the call manager and voice gateways.
- Replacement of Courthouse firewall and security software.
- Implementation of an IT Help Desk software package and employee portal, Compass.
- Implementation of new election hardware and software.
- Assisted in the development of the OnBase document imaging system in District Court.
- Technical assistance in creation of new County website plus Courthouse Security Project.

### MSU Extension – Director: Julie Pioch

- MSUE and Parks Department formed a new partnership to provide timely customer service.
- Forty-seven youth and adults from St. Joseph County attended the 4-H Exploration Days.
- In 2017, had 721 youth enrolled in 4-H with 31 active 4-H Clubs.
- Hosted 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Conservation Tour for area 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. More than 700 students in attendance from 11 school districts.
- Nutrition Education is taught throughout the county within schools; 435 adults and 649 youth completed a 6-week series.
- Provided Field Crops Webinar Series and other farm-related support.

### Parks and Recreation – Director: Jaymes MacDonald

#### **Meyer Broadway**

- Began construction of mountain bike trail
- Hosted 1<sup>st</sup> Annual St. Joseph County Shootout disc golf tournament
- Hosted Color Fest
- Sealed and patched all asphalt parking lots and drives

**Timm Preserve**

- Constructed and installed final 180' of stationary and floating boardwalk tying entire property together

**Covered Bridge Farm**

- Installed "river walk" on southeastern shoreline
- Renovated 1870 Barn
- Constructed new bathrooms
- Planted 25 trees throughout property
- Installed parking lot lighting
- Installed parking lot
- Landscaped property
- Installed pull-offs along entry drive

**Plumb Lake**

- Completed park masterplan
- Constructed 1200' of boardwalk
- Constructed and installed 120' of boardwalk leading to lake
- Constructed and installed 60' of floating dock leading to fishing pier
- Constructed and installed 24' x 8' floating pier
- Constructed and installed 500' of boardwalk through first wetland section
- Constructed and began installation of 700' section of boardwalk through second wetland section
- Cut-in approximately 2 miles of trail through woodland
- Installed entry drives and parking areas
- Installed rope and boulder playground
- Installed east and west pavilions
- Installed new entry sign

**Water Trail**

- Constructed and installed boardwalk, stairs and dock section at Haybridge Rd
- Constructed and installed floating bridge and stationary boardwalk at Null Rd

**Cade Lake**

- Completed construction of water and sewer to 44 campsites
- Constructed new wellhouse
- Remodeled bathroom floors
- Constructed and installed 180' timber staircase connecting top and bottom of campground
- Expanded beach
- Installed new limestone/concrete boat launch
- Installed new floating dock sections on existing fishing piers
- Installed crushed limestone on all lower campsites, drives and parking areas

### **Sand Lake**

- Installed new ADA playground
- Excavated and leveled 50' x 50' x 12" area
- Installed and concreted 43 posts
- Installed edging
- Installed weed fabric
- Installed 120 cubic yards of playground mulch
- Installed accessible path from paved parking area
- Built and installed access ramp for playground entry
- Created new parking areas and installed crushed limestone in entry drive, parking lots, boat launch and park drives
- Installed new perimeter fence
- Installed new floating fishing pier
- Installed new community grills

### **Probate Court and Juvenile Division – Honorable Judge David Tomlinson**

- Held a successful, packed courtroom for Adoption Day in November celebrating adoptions in all forms.
- Received very high rates of satisfaction from users of the courts based on the latest State Court Administrator's Office customer satisfaction survey.
- Heard 193 new child protective proceeding petitions.
- Continued close cooperation with the Child Trauma Assessment Group to aid in the treatment of children in cases of child abuse and neglect.
- Continued to utilize the Juvenile Day Treatment Program for delinquent youths.

### **Sheriff's Department – Bradley D. Balk, Sheriff**

- Sent two new deputies to Accident Investigation School.
- Covered Bridge Medical was added to cover medical for inmates with two new RN's added for staffing.
- New security locks added to west wing in the jail to replace locks from 1962.
- Sent four Corrections Officers to Corrections Academy.
- Received new transport van for inmates which replaced an 18-year old Dodge van.
- Added heat and new overhead doors to largest barn that stores Emergency Management equipment.
- Updated classification system for inmates (JAMIN).
- Installed new cameras for catwalks and day room in the jail along with intercom system.
- Sent two men to Police Academy at KVCC for police training.
- Changed three new patrol vehicles and transport van to carry men and women at the same time.

## 2017 St. Joseph County Departmental Accomplishments

- Added six Corrections Officers and Trained for Court Security.
- Added and implement safety protocol and improved security communications at Courthouse.
- Added and acquired an armored vehicle (MRAP) for SRT unit acquired from the Federal Government Program.

### Treasurer – Judith Ratering

- Established a new credit card policy for taxpayer security.
- Set-up recurring payments for retirees insurance.
- Increased tax search revenue with the selling of tax rolls.
- Hosted BS&A for all local treasurers; cost was divided equally.
- Changed daily deposits to be taken to bank by a security officer.
- Participated in Step Forward Michigan press conference to promote help for taxpayers.

### Veterans' Services – Director: Stoney Summey

- Opened first Veterans' Transition Home in the State of Michigan.
- Received grants from Three Rivers Community Foundation and Home Depot to begin construction on Homeless Veterans' Transition duplex.
- Veteran Justice Outreach assisted the courts with 17 veterans to identify veterans who would benefit from treatment as an alternative to incarceration.
- Office served 915 veterans filing for Veterans' Affairs benefits.
- Linked services with Support Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) to provide emergency housing services for St. Joseph County veterans.
- Linked services with Community Action Agency to provide Social Security Services (SOAR) for St. Joseph County veterans.

A message from the County Administrator.

Our mission is always to support the citizens of this county, and we strive to meet that responsibility each day. I am especially grateful to the Commissioners, other elected officials, and the citizens of St. Joseph County for their support of the efforts put forth to improve our quality of life. The accomplishments listed above are merely a snapshot of the continued commitment our staff demonstrates on a daily basis. We will remain committed to running a government that is effective, efficient, and innovative. In the coming year, we will continue to focus on fiscal integrity while balancing the needs of our citizens and continuing to make St. Joseph County a vibrant County for the citizens we serve.

Respectfully,

*Teresa Doehring*

Teresa C. Doehring, St. Joseph County Administrator/Controller