

# Dickinson County Courthouse Newsletter

January 15, 2013

## Employee Spotlight!

Let's get to know our County employees!



The December Newsletter featured the picture of the little girl to the left. Did you guess Janelle Treganza? Janelle has worked for Dickinson County in the Recorder's office since 2002.

The following is a little personal information provided by Janelle.

**Start date with Dickinson County:**

June 24, 2002

**Where born:** Washington, Iowa

**Places Lived:**

Washington, Milford, & Spirit Lake, Iowa

**Hobbies, talents, special interests:** I love to go for walks, ride my bike and listen to music.

**Favorite Travel Spots:** I would have to say Duluth, Minnesota. It is so beautiful there & so much to do.

**Favorite Food:** Pizza

**Least Favorite Food:** Goulash

**If I were stuck on an island, I would bring (3 things):** My laptop & both my boys.

**Something Few Know About Me:** I am very afraid of water. I start to panic when it comes up to my waist. When I was little I fell in to a pool & it took me a little bit to get out & ever since then I have been very afraid.

**Favorite thing to do in Dickinson County:** I love to go to the flea markets in the summer. I enjoy the bike trails. Love to walk or ride my bike on the trails. Dickinson County has such beautiful trails!

## News from the Assessor's Office:

The Iowa Department of Revenue is responsible for "equalizing" assessments every two years. Following is a general explanation of the purpose of equalization.

The Department compares the assessors' abstracts to a "sales assessment ratio study" it has completed independently of the assessors. If the assessment (by property class) is 5% or more above or below the sales ratio study, the Department increases or decreases the assessment. (There is no sales ratio study for agricultural and industrial property.)

Equalization occurs on an entire class of property, not on individual property. Also, equalization occurs on an assessing jurisdiction basis, not on a statewide basis.

Equalization is important because it helps maintain equitable assessments among classes of property and among assessing jurisdictions. This contributes to a more fair distribution of state aid, such as aid to schools. It also helps to equally distribute the total tax burden within the area.

The State has ordered a 15% commercial state equalization order on Dickinson County commercial property. It will be applied to the 2013 assessed values (taxes payable in September 2014-March 2015.)

Assessors will be introducing a new method of arriving at values for agricultural land in Iowa.

This procedure has been discussed over the past two years. Some of those participating in the discussion were Farm Bureau, the Beef Industry, Corn & Soybean growers, Iowa Department of Revenue and representatives from the Iowa State Association of Assessors.

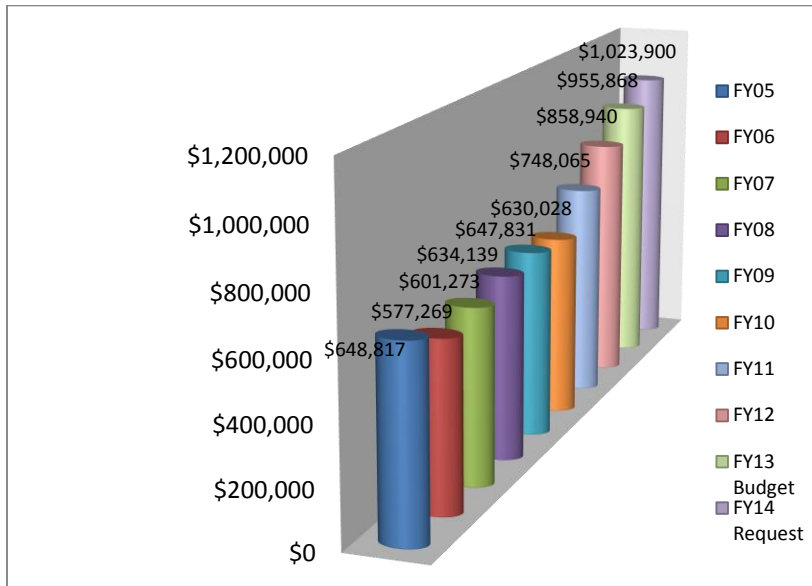
The new legislative rule will make distinctions between crop and non-crop land which will be used for assessments in future years.

The results of this new rule will provide more uniform assessments across jurisdiction lines. Concerns were raised about how non-crop land assessments were adjusted in some counties and not in others. While assessors were consistent within each county, they were not consistent from county to county. The inconsistency between counties prompted the IDR to create rules on how non-crop land should be assessed. Currently, Dickinson County is making adjustments to non-crop land.

# News on the Dickinson County Health Insurance and the Wellness Program Success:

The Iowa State Association of Counties Board of Directors approved health insurance rates for the ISAC Group Health Program for FY-2015 during their meeting on December 4, 2013. These rates will go into effect on July 1, 2014.

Dickinson County has purchased its health insurance through this group since 1982. Since 1982, Dickinson County has had \$16,162,379.42 in medical expenses. Over the past 10 years, Dickinson County has experienced a 45% increase in the single and family policy rates. The Wellness program approved by the Iowa Association of Counties has, in fact, helped to defer some of these increases in insurance premiums. The Dickinson County single policy rate for FY2015 is \$571 and the family policy rate is \$1285. For Dickinson County this is a 2.15% increase over 2014 single policy rate and 2.72% increase over the 2014 family rate. Because of the employee participation in the wellness program, these percentages of increases are considerably lower than other counties whose employees did not participate or make their goals. For example, our neighbor county of Osceola will be experiencing an increase of over 9%. Below you see a chart of the actual costs to Dickinson County for health insurance over the years. The estimated annual cost to the County for health insurance for FY15 is \$1,060,512 even with the discount for the Dickinson County participation in the Wellness programs.



## Nancy Reiman retires after 41 years at Dickinson County:

Nancy's last day was December 31, 2013 after working in the Courthouse for 41 years. The Supervisors are seeking applicants interested in being appointed to the position. The appointed term is only until the upcoming general election in November where the public will elect their Auditor. Applications and resumes must be submitted to the Dickinson County Auditor's office on or before Friday, January 10, 2014. Interviews will be held the week of January 13<sup>th</sup> and the Supervisors will make the appointment on January 21, 2014.



## December Employee Spotlight



**Let's get to know our County employees!**

Find out more about this Dickinson County employee in the February issue.

In the meantime, can you guess who this is?

### Motivational quote for the month:

If you can't fly, then run

If you can't run, then walk,

If you can't walk, then crawl

But whatever you do

You have to keep moving forward.

- Martin Luther King Jr.