

**Antrim County**  
**District 3**  
**Commissioner Terry VanAlstine**  
**vanalstinet@antrimcounty.org**  
**231-676-0563**

**January 2024**

**County Employment Opportunities**

- Airport Foreperson (FT)
- Antrim County Transportation-Mechanic (FT)
- Commission on Aging-Homemaker (PT)
- MSU Extension-Executive Secretary (FT) candidate in background check
- Sheriff's Office-Civil Process (PT) (2 positions)
- Sheriff's Office-Deputy (FT) Noah Tucker began on Dec. 13th
- Sheriff's Office-Corrections (FT)
- Sheriff's Office-Snowmobile Patrol Officer (PT)

**County Building Façade-**

Progressive AE and Spence Brothers continue to work on the building. The brick is coming along with the Southwest corner and now East side of the building nearly complete and they will soon be moving to the North side of the building. The dark grey metal panels have been installed in a number of areas around the building. Additional steel work outside has been done, along with quite a bit of drywall and mudding. There has been increased insulation added to the insulated metal panels to resist heat flow. This should allow the County to see a cost savings to the energy bills.

**Health Dept. Building Renovations:**

The Sheriff Department road patrol and undersheriff offices will be relocated to half of the current Health Department building in Bellaire. Painting and carpeting have been completed. Doors and other finish work will continue into December. Technology is currently being setup. They are waiting on doors and few other items to move in before January.

**Public Safety Center (new jail)-**

Grand Valley State University mailed survey postcards to determine if there is support for the public funding of a new Center and results will come out in January. A Public Safety Center webpage has been created to keep everyone informed at [https://www.antrimcounty.org/departments\\_services/administration\\_planning/public\\_safety\\_center/index.php](https://www.antrimcounty.org/departments_services/administration_planning/public_safety_center/index.php)

### **Cellmate Food Solution-**

This service will be a private company servicing food in the jail which will save the County more than \$50,000 a year plus wages. Moved by LaVanway, and seconded by Helwig, that the Board approve and authorize the Board Chair to execute an agreement between Antrim County and Cellmate Food Solutions, Inc. and identify the Food Service Coordinator as a position to be discontinued, and authorize the Finance Director to make the appropriate budget amendments. Motion carried as follows: Yes-Hefferan, Rubingh, VanAlstine, Helwig, LaVanway; No-None; Absent-None.

### **Looking for volunteers-**

Antrim County Victim Services Unit is looking for volunteers to support survivors and victims in times of crisis. The primary goal is to provide short term comfort and compassionate assistance to loved ones and their families: to help both the survivor and the law enforcement officers during the initial stages of life changing events when tragic news is experienced or delivered. If interested, call Sheriff office (231) 533-8627.

### **Antrim Creek Natural Area-**

Two new vehicle counters and two new trail counters were installed at the park. These will be beneficial when applying for grants.

### **Northern Lakes Economic Alliance-**

Payton Heins has been hired as the new President of the organization. She will begin working January 8th. Her previous job was Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives at the Michigan Office of Rural Prosperity.

NLEA has approved a new revolving small business loan fund for the 4 county region. NLEA received a \$400,000 grant from the Economic Development Administration Federal grant in which \$100,000 was matched for a total of \$500,000 which is available to supplement business loans from traditional lending institutions to assist small businesses. It will target loans of less than \$10,000 up to \$100,000 to help businesses with gap financing that's combined with traditional bank loans to help existing companies expand while adding or retaining jobs, or help startup businesses launch their operations. As the loans get repaid, the funds will go back into the revolving fund to support the next loans. The loan process will be made public soon on the NLEA website [northernlakes.net](http://northernlakes.net).

### **Health Dept. of Northwest Michigan-**

Accomplishments for 2023 were:

- Continuing transparency with residents through speaking engagements, social media, news releases, community listening sessions, and facility tours.
- Investing in staff through summer office visits.
- Updating billing and purchasing software.
- Modernizing space in Gaylord office so it can be used for meetings and trainings within the agency and by partner organizations.

-Getting approval to digitize land use records for public access in Emmet and Antrim Counties.

A new state law adds dental to hearing and vision screenings for incoming kindergartens and first graders through the Health Departments. The program is called Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment (KOHA) and is expected to serve students next spring at kindergarten round ups and health fairs.

January is radon health month for the Health Department. They give out free radon testing kits to people to test radon in their homes. Elmira has the highest level of radon in the four county region.

### **Unified Trial Court-**

The Board of Commissioners requested, through concurrent legislation, that the Michigan Legislature, the Governor, and the Michigan Supreme Court to do the following:

- A. Combine the functions of the Probate and the District Courts as of January 1, 2025.
- B. Adopt a concurrent jurisdiction plan for the Antrim County Probate, and District Courts as of the appropriate dates.

Motion by LaVanway, seconded by Rubingh to create a unified trial court in Antrim County. Motion carried as follows: Yes-Hefferan, Rubingh, VanAlstine, and LaVanway; No-Helwig; Absent-None.

### **Free tax preparation services-**

If you and your family make \$75,000 a year or less then you qualify for free tax filing with Michigan Community Action Agency. Your federal and state taxes will be prepared and electronically filed by IRS certified volunteers who some are retired CPA's. Find more information at <http://mcaa.net/taxes>.

### **Materials Management Plan-**

Municipalities in the County will be receiving this plan which was previously called solid waste plan to evaluate potential for a multi-county plan; updates will be given as this process progresses. It will need to be approved of by the municipalities.

### **North Country Trail-**

On December 7th, The North Country Scenic Trail officially became a national park system that has over 500 miles of trails spread throughout the state. In the northwest lower region it includes an 18 mile loop at the Jordan Valley Pathway in the Jordan River Valley in Jordan, Chestonia Mancelona Township and Warner Townships. The local chapter is the Jordan Valley 45 degree chapter of the North Country Trail Association who maintains the trail, hosts area hikes, work projects, special events (National Trail Day, guest speakers, etc.) and has regular meetings.

### **Property Purchase-**

This is a house next door to the Commission on Aging Building in which one of the owners died and wanted the house to go to the County at a reasonable price. It will be used for an expansion in the near future when and if needed. Motion by Bill Hefferan, second by Jason Helwig to approve the release of funds for the purchase of 310 E. Cayuga, at \$200,000 and an amount not to exceed \$5,000 for closing costs, authorize the chair to sign closing documents, and authorize the Finance Director to make the necessary budget amendments to fund balance. Yes-Hefferan, Rubingh, VanAlstine, Helwig, and LaVanway; No-none; Absent-None.

### **Adult Day Service-**

The County is exploring the possibility of expanding the Commission on Aging site in Bellaire to be able to offer Adult Day Respite and Personal Care Services for County residents. The Vision is for a safe, home-like setting where participants can spend time and have their needs addressed, allowing caregivers to take a break. Adult day services can include personal care as well as socialization and activities with their peers in a professional care setting designed for older adults who require supervised care. To help determine if this is a need, complete the survey by January 31, 2024 at

[https://qualtricsxmjfkjcpnp.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8wYqoKTC50](https://qualtricsxmjfkjcpnp.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8wYqoKTC50)

**LVPGS** It is also available on the County home page, County Facebook page, and hard copies are also available to fill out at COA.