

Written by: *Commissioner Randy Phiel*

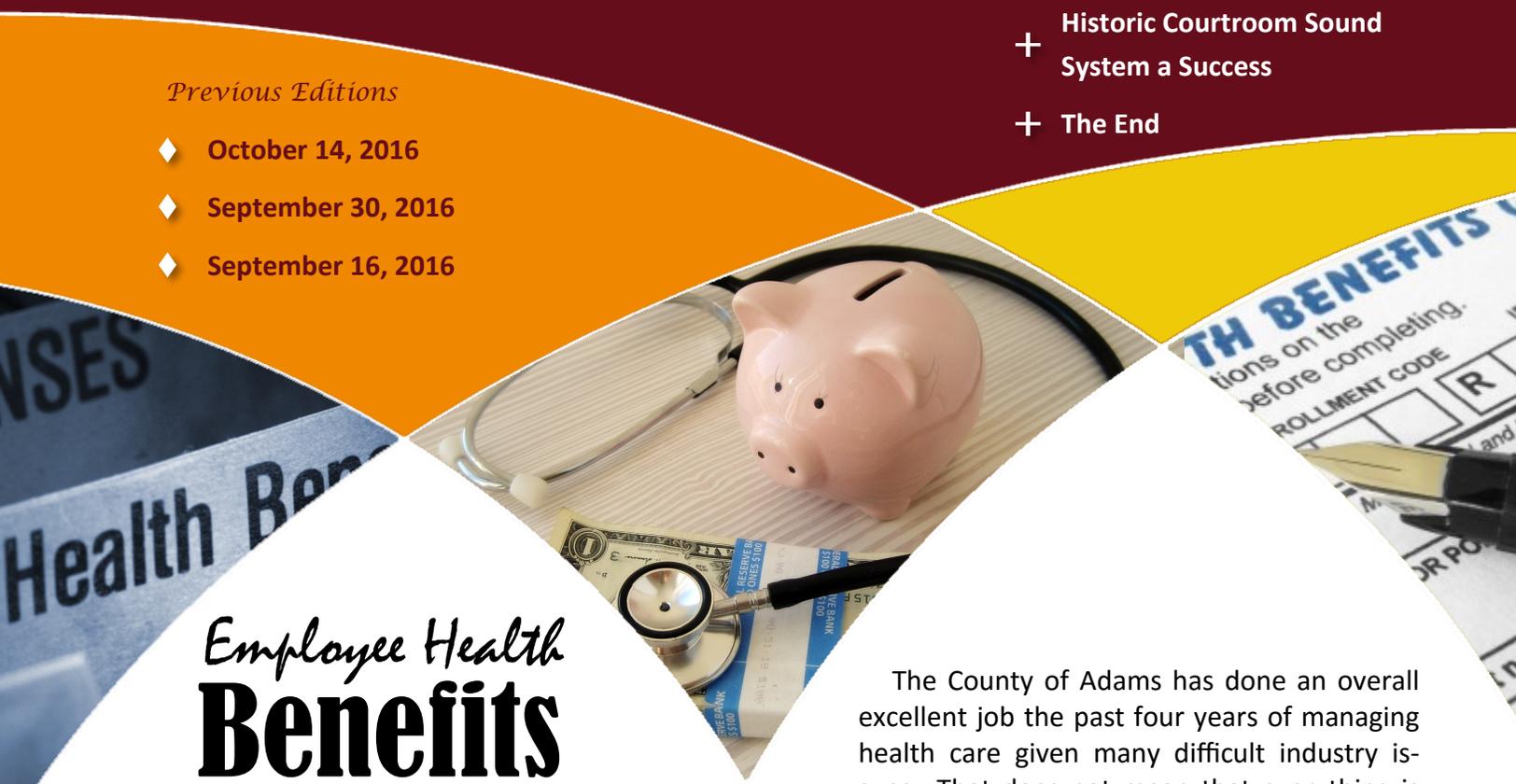
# T.G.I.F.

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*Previous Editions*

- ◆ October 14, 2016
- ◆ September 30, 2016
- ◆ September 16, 2016



## *Employee Health* **Benefits**

Our HR & Administrative Team has been working diligently reviewing numerous health benefit packages for 2017. Health insurance is over a \$5M county budget line item. The Board fully understands that the health insurance benefit is extremely important to most county staff. For the past four years Adams County has been able to defy the health insurance industry standard of severely escalating rates and decreasing benefits. For the last four years we have annually reviewed our health insurance, changed providers if necessary, and have analyzed and tweaked employee programs such as emergency room, prescriptions and wellness.

The County of Adams has done an overall excellent job the past four years of managing health care given many difficult industry issues. That does not mean that everything is perfect. We know that we have had an issue with our current Third Party Administrator and are addressing that issue. We are doing our due diligence to ensure fiscal responsibility while making certain our employees have an excellent benefit package. We are coming down the home stretch of proposal review and as soon as details are available there will be informational meetings scheduled.

# BUDGET *Time*

The Finance Department has disseminated the budget targets for all departments.

Year 2017 projected revenues are just a few dollars more than what was expected in 2016. The flat revenue makes the 2017 budget very tight. As everyone knows expenses just seem to be increasing at all levels and that is no different for the county. We are very optimistic that the departments will try to remain within their targets, however, all needs for the future will be addressed and the Commissioners will have to determine what needs are essential or if something can wait.

The Commissioners are very proud of the accomplishments of the departments and their service to the residents of Adams County. While being fiscally responsible, we will continue to provide great service that our residents have come to expect and deserve.

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## *Information Technology* **UPDATE**

The Information Technology Department went live with the new Eclipse document imaging system on Wednesday, October 26<sup>th</sup>. After two months of user training within a test server, the departments have started using the Eclipse system full time. The new platform provides a much-needed refresh from the legacy platform which had been used within the County since 2005. The new Eclipse platform is web based and operates modernized web technologies for rendering of images within web browsers such as internet explorer and google chrome. The Eclipse software continues to be developed and updated by the same DocStar company. Departments within various County offices have found the new platform easy to navigate and didn't experience a steep learning curve compared to the legacy system. The IT Department, along with the system vendor, will be working with departments over the next few weeks to address any work orders or requests pertaining to the new Eclipse system.

Also, the IT Department went live with the New Oxford Borough website on Friday, September 30th. The new website contains relevant information for meetings, ordinances, and news. The Borough's website will be a valued resource for their residents and others doing business with New Oxford to acquire information about the Borough.

In addition, the IT Department recently enhanced the backup storage environment within the backup data center located at the Emergency Services building. The additional storage will be used to create extra copies of backups to further enhance recovery objectives. The IT Department continues to strive towards protecting all County data along with providing safeguards to ensure successful recovery when called upon from the backups that are stored.

# Tax Appeals

On Tuesday the Board of Commissioners and the Auxiliary Appeals Board completed 370 2016 tax appeals. The appeals began in August. The breakdown included 242 Residential appeals, 25 Commercial appeals and 10 Clean/Green appeals. Our thanks to the folks in the Tax Services Department for the amount of work, time and effort they put forth to facilitate the appeals process. The effort includes a lot of behind the scenes work to get to the point of hearing and the follow-up to the hearing. We would also like to thank our Auxiliary Appeals Board that hears many of the residential appeals. Our residents can be assured that an effort is made to be professional, fair and consistent in every case.

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## **Adams County Human Services Building**

Tuesday I had the pleasure of touring the Human Services Building and Wednesday I was back there again for a meeting for Department Directors to begin the furnishings selection process. The Phase I block and metal stud walls are up and utilities are being run. Phase I includes Children & Youth, Probation, IT and Security at the entrance. It is nice to be able to see the outline of individual offices and hallways. Architect Josh Bower of Crabtree & Rorbaugh tells us that everything is going well and we are on schedule at this point.

## **Presidential Election Taxes Election Office**

This has been a year (month) to remember for the Adams County Elections Office. They have processed over 3000 registrations in the past month. Director Monica Dutko says that some of the registrants had never voted, others had not voted for five years and others were changing party. It has been hectic in the elections office and along with some part-time assistance, even Commissioner Qually was spotted in there last week with his sleeves rolled up.

Monica said she expects the voter turnout to be between 60-70%. When compared to a non-presidential election where we are sometimes lucky to see 30% turnout – this is quite a difference. Monica reports that the ratio of Republicans to Democrats is fairly normal for Adams County; but the ratio of Independents is higher than normal. The Board of Commissioners acts as the Adams County Election Board and the Board, along with other county staff, will be circulating to all the polls on election day. We ask for your patience and respect toward all of our poll workers as they are admirably performing a civic duty and there may be lines longer than normal.

# Historic Courtroom Sound System a *Success!*

The proof is in the pudding and we held our first public commissioners meeting Wednesday morning utilizing the new sound system. We got thumbs up from the front, middle and back of the gallery. I would describe it as “surround sound.” The commissioners and the person at the podium will need to get used to louder volume than what we are used to; but even a soft talker at the podium with their back to the gallery will now be heard in the back row!

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Beside our Election Office will anyone else be glad when the political commercials and the political rhetoric of this past year are over? Even if you are mentally oversaturated with politics - that is no excuse for not exercising your fundamental freedom to vote for the candidate of your choice. Also remember this is not just about the Presidential Election – state and local elections have significant impact on your everyday life!

Fall is a phenomenal time of year In Adams County. No matter what you do get out there and experience all the historical, recreational, agricultural, natural and cultural opportunities that beautiful Adams County has to offer!

*“...get out there and experience all the historical, recreational, agricultural, natural and cultural opportunities that beautiful Adams County has to offer!”*

# The End