

# 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**HEALTHIEST**

**SAFEST**

**MOST PROSPEROUS**



# MOVING AHEAD...

To ensure the Health Department continues to meet the needs of the residents of Marathon County, the department with the Board of Health underwent a strategic planning process in 2013. Marathon County Health Department 2013-2018 Strategic Plan will guide the department's action to contribute towards the county's goal to be the healthiest, safest and most prosperous county in the state.

## Vision:

To be the healthiest and safest county in which to live, learn, work and play.

## Mission:

To advance a healthy Marathon County community by preventing disease, promoting health, and protecting the public from environmental hazards.

To achieve our vision, the Health Department working closely with community partners continues to:

- Decrease the impact of alcohol and other drug abuse in families and our communities, by increasing awareness of how drug abuse is ruining the lives of children and families and giving communities tools to create a culture of safe drinking
- Prevent chronic diseases by keeping the community informed of risks associated with tobacco and new tobacco products, working with farmers to increase access to local food, and expand places for individuals to walk and bike
- Prevent and control communicable disease by working with clinics, hospitals, schools, and child care to promote immunizations and follow-up on reported diseases such as whooping cough, tuberculosis
- Ensure babies are given a great start by providing education and links to community resources to expected parents and parents of newborns
- Monitor the quality of drinking water
- Increase businesses confidence that the food they serve is safe

The following highlights from the 2013 Annual Report provide a brief summary of the examples of our work to help Marathon County become the healthiest, safest, and most prosperous.



## HEALTHIEST SAFEST MOST PROSPEROUS



### Find out more...

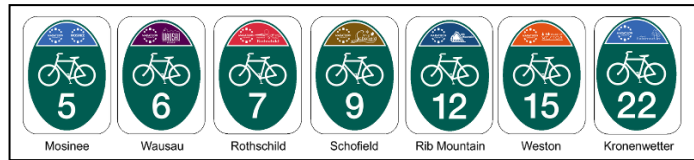
To read our full annual report, visit [www.co.marathon.wi.us](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us)

Additional resources available on our website include annual reports from prior years, the Marathon County Health Department Strategic Plan, and 2013 County Health Rankings.



# WHAT IS HEALTHIEST?

## MPO Bicycle Route & Signage System



In 2012-2013, The Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) created an extensive arterial bicycle route network comprised of 10 unique routes that encompass each of the seven municipalities (Wausau, Rib Mountain, Schofield, Rothschild, Weston, Kronenwetter, and Mosinee) in the MPO. The 105-mile bicycle route system is accompanied by over 600 custom bicycle route signs that are color-coded and numbered by route. A unique feature is The Central Loop, which is a 26-mile circular route that includes sections of multiple routes and highlights many of the prominent bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the metro area.

Marathon County and each municipality involved signed an MOU that designated the streets included in the network as bicycle routes. In addition, the MOU ensured that the county and municipalities adopted, installed, and will maintain the bicycle route signs for their designated highways and streets. The new bicycle route signs were installed throughout the summer of 2013.

A Wausau Area Bike Map was also developed in 2013 during a bike map charrette in spring 2013. The project also included the development of a new website [www.bicycleausau.org](http://www.bicycleausau.org). In May 2013, 15,000 maps were widely distributed throughout the community to local bike shops, area businesses, local municipal centers, and the Wausau Convention and Visitors Bureau.

### Other Events and Accomplishments:

- Promoted Bike & Walk Week events
- Promoted bike commuting, community bike rides, bicycle rodeos, and coordinated walk and bike to school events
- Contacted local media outlets and provided list of events
- Initiated Bicycle Friendly Community Application in fall 2013
- Hosted a press conference to release new bicycle route signage system on May 2, 2013
- The City Pages' 2013 Summer Fun Book included 10 family friendly bike excursions



## HEALTHIEST

Find out more...

Bicycle Wausau: [www.bicycleausau.org](http://www.bicycleausau.org)

Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization: [www.ci.wausau.wi.us](http://www.ci.wausau.wi.us)



# WHAT IS HEALTHIEST?

## Start Right

With Start Right providing services to families from pregnancy through age four, families benefit from the support to help them be the best parents they can be. The nurses and family visitors form meaningful relationships with families, supporting them in their parenting, connecting them to community resources, and encouraging their independence while giving them the level of support that they need to raise healthy, school ready children. It is common for the nurses and family visitors to receive warm thanks from families for their support through their pregnancy, postpartum period, and home visiting. By supporting effective parenting through Start Right and collaborating partners, we are ultimately strengthening our community.

Additional work was done through the Wisconsin Breastfeeding Coalition—Heart of Wisconsin Chapter to promote the health of infants. Through a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services, we partnered with the Childcare Connection and the area Hmong community to promote training sessions. Thirty-six child care staff people attended, and 6 coalition members became coaches to assist through on site visits to the centers. We anticipate a total of 14 centers will be recognized as breastfeeding friendly. A community campaign was launched, promoting breastfeeding with 6 billboards, media interviews about or activities, and a public event for the grand opening of the Younkers Lounge.

## Communicable Disease

As part of our communicable disease investigations, we assure individuals receive appropriate treatment and provide health teaching on ways to prevent further spread of these diseases. In order to be able to identify patterns and trends of communicable disease occurrences, Marathon County tracks the type and number of reportable diseases, as well as reports received from area health care providers, laboratories, schools, and day care centers. On a weekly basis, infection control practitioners from area hospitals and clinics receive a report of communicable disease occurrences in Marathon County from our epidemiologist.

In 2013 Marathon County Health Department received 940 confirmed and probable reports of 37 different communicable diseases. The most commonly reported disease in Marathon County in 2013 was Chlamydia, with 334 cases.

## HOW CAN HEALTHIEST ALSO BE...

### **SAFEST?**

#### **BIKE ROUTES:**

Marathon County Health Department distributed “3 ft. It’s the Law” signs throughout the community to increase awareness and safety for area cyclists.

#### **START RIGHT:**

Our public health nurses provide education to families with newborns, promoting safe sleep practices for infants, and counsel on tobacco and substance abuse.

#### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE:**

The communicable disease program contributes to Marathon County being the safest by protecting residents from the occurrence of disease and the spread of disease through prompt infectious disease investigations and through immunizations.

### **MOST PROSPEROUS?**

#### **BIKE ROUTES:**

The newly developed bike route system provides residents and visitors with additional options for transportation and recreation.

#### **START RIGHT:**

The various program areas of Start Right provide parents with the tools necessary to raise healthy and successful children.

#### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE:**

Communicable disease control contributes to Marathon County being the most prosperous by limiting the occurrence and spread of disease, decreasing loss of work and school days.

# HEALTHIEST



**Find out more...**

Parenting Information from UW-Extension: [parenting.uwex.edu/](http://parenting.uwex.edu/)

# WHAT IS SAFEST?



## Pushback Against Drug Abuse

The *Pushback* initiative is based on the following three principles: Heroin, prescription medications and other illicit drugs are a threat to public health & safety; Funding for prevention, treatment and enforcement is critical – law enforcement can't do it alone; We are ALL impacted, and we ALL play a part in the solution. This initiative was launched via press conference held in Dudley Tower on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 – the first of four successful press conferences to be held throughout the year.

A variety of materials were developed to raise awareness in the community, such as window clings for display in homes, worksites or vehicles in support of the initiative, "What is drug activity and how to report it" bookmarks, "How to identify if a loved one is using, and how to intervene" reference cards, and "What individuals, schools, neighborhoods and foundations can do" activity sheets.

### **What will you do to GET INVOLVED in the fight to save our community?**

For more information visit [www.pushbackdrugs.com](http://www.pushbackdrugs.com)

#### **Other Events and Accomplishments:**

- Awarded one of the five community grants available through the Wisconsin Department of Justice to address heroin – included hosting a joint press conference with the WI Attorney General to announce the award in September 2013
- Garnered public support through media engagement, community outreach, and presentations to local, state and federal policymakers– including new resources and funding to address the growing problem
- Recognized as 1 of the 26 programs from throughout the United States for SAMHSA's *Service to Science* award- a national initiative designed to enhance the evaluation capacity of innovative programs and practices that address critical substance abuse prevention and related behavioral health needs



## SAFEST

**Find out more...**

Marathon County Alcohol and Other Drugs Partnership Council: [www.aodpartnership.org/](http://www.aodpartnership.org/)

Pushback Against Drug Abuse: [www.pushbackdrugs.org/](http://www.pushbackdrugs.org/)





# WHAT IS SAFEST?

## Water Testing Lab

The Marathon County Public Health Laboratory provides convenient, reliable, and reasonably priced water testing services to the citizens of Marathon County and surrounding counties with the goal of safer water supplies. The lab is involved in monitoring public and private drinking water systems and recreational waters, such as swimming pools and beaches, and tests for several microbiological and chemical parameters. In addition, lab personnel interpret results for well owners and provide education concerning water safety issues. Of the drinking water samples tested in 2013, 11% were unsafe, up from 9% in 2012.

In 2013, 184 facilities with public water supplies which are sampled under the DNR-TNC contract were tested. Among these, 92% tested safe, while 8% were found unsafe. The unsafe systems were ordered closed until a safe water supply could be identified. Once a water supply system is returned to service, sampling is conducted in the following month to ensure the system remains safe.

Marathon County has 89 licensed public recreational water facilities that submit regular samples for bacterial analysis. Facilities are inspected annually, or more frequently when water quality samples exceed bacteriological standards successively, when complaints are received, or violations during inspections indicate a need to monitor more closely. In 2013, 3% of recreational water samples tested were bacteriologically unsatisfactory, requiring follow-up action, compared to 5% in 2012.



## HOW CAN SAFEST ALSO BE...

### HEALTHIEST?

#### PUSHBACK:

The Pushback campaign created a countywide environment where people are encouraged to play an active role in pushing back against the threats safety caused by drug abuse.

#### WATER TESTING LAB:

Local residents benefit from having recreational water facilities and restaurants that have water resources free from contamination.

### MOST PROSPEROUS?

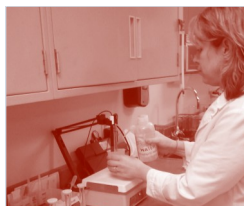
#### PUSHBACK:

The absence of drug abuse in the neighborhood and home creates the conditions where children are safer, less stressed, and can more easily learn. Drug free adults are more likely to be better prepared for the workforce, and provide a more positive role model for their children.

#### WATER TESTING LAB:

Maintaining safe water supplies allows local recreational water facilities and restaurants to remain open for business.

## SAFEST



### Find out more...

Marathon County: [www.co.marathon.wi.us](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us)

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

Drinking Water: [dnr.wi.gov/topic/DrinkingWater/](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/DrinkingWater/)

# WHAT IS MOST PROSPEROUS?

## Farm to School

As a way to increase access to local healthy food, Marathon County Health Department continues work on the Farm to School initiative. Staff at the Health Department provide support for food service at schools and farmers on buying and selling local foods as well as developing close relationships. Projects have also included building school gardens in several schools throughout Marathon County.

Farm to School is a movement that includes some or all of the following: local procurement of food for school meal programs, food and agriculture curriculums, and experiential activities including school gardens, farm field trips, and science class. The purpose is to improve the quality of foods offered and create a learning experience about where our food comes from. These strategies are most successful when multiple approaches are taken; reinforcing good choices throughout the school learning environment.

Working with local schools and farmers has resulted in improved local purchasing of produce. All of the western Marathon County school districts (food service and administration) are participating in networking meetings with local growers and producers facilitated by MCHD. The result is new relationships among participants and increased food safety knowledge for the school staff and producers. More WI grown produce is on the menu at Wausau, D.C. Everest, Marathon, Stratford, Colby, Athens, Abbotsford and Spencer Districts because of purchasing through food vendors and local farmers, and utilizing produce from school gardens. Local farmers have found new markets for some of their products.



## MOST PROSPEROUS

Find out more...

National Farm to School Network: [www.farmtoschool.org/](http://www.farmtoschool.org/)



# WHAT IS MOST PROSPEROUS?

## Licensing

To prevent food and waterborne diseases, Marathon County Health Department licenses and inspects local restaurants and food retailers. Environmental sanitarians from the department complete the inspections, and work closely with restaurant and retail food operators to ensure appropriate regulations are being followed. This strong working relationship between the sanitarians and operators not only provides a level of safety for customers, but also helps to ensure the success of the operators and their businesses.

Under our agent contracts, the department is required to conduct a minimum of one annual inspection; pre-inspections for compliance prior to issuing a permit; necessary follow up inspections such as complaints and re-inspections to ensure proper compliance; and a variety of consultations by phone or on site. Each of the 926 licensed facilities is inspected at least annually. Program staff serves as the primary investigators when there is a suspected food or water borne illness in Marathon County.

A customer satisfaction survey was sent to every licensed operator within Marathon County in 2013. With a 45.5% return rate, the department found the results to be very positive. The survey also asked respondents to indicate any areas for improvement, and included 155 responses, which could be fit into general categories of: positive of the licensing program and staff (58), compliments of specific inspectors (58), cost (14), inspection consistency (11), scheduling inspection appointments (7), timeliness of services (5), and other (2).



# MOST PROSPEROUS



## HOW CAN MOST PROSPEROUS ALSO BE...

### HEALTHIEST?

#### FARM TO SCHOOL:

The Farm to School program supports the expansion of locally-grown food into school lunch programs, providing our children with high quality nutritious food during the school day. It is a key strategy to tackling our obesity epidemic.

#### LICENSING:

The Licensing program contributes to being the healthiest by reducing risks for food or waterborne illness for consumers visiting restaurants, grocery stores, or pools. Reducing risks for illness involves performing inspections, providing education and information, and enforcement.

### SAFEST?

#### FARM TO SCHOOL:

Children learning gardening in school are able to learn new skills and gain knowledge, then bring what is learned home to their family. This provides an opportunity for increasing quality family time and providing a safe activity for the family.

#### LICENSING:

The Licensing program contributes to being the safest by reducing risks for illness and injury. Ensuring that consumers are safe and free from illness is important for businesses to remain successful in Marathon County.

### Find out more...

Marathon County Health Department: [www.co.marathon.wi.us](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us)

Wisconsin Department of Health Services: [dhs.wisconsin.gov](http://dhs.wisconsin.gov)

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: [datcp.wisconsin.gov](http://datcp.wisconsin.gov)