

County Coroner

John R. Baird, MD, MPH

October 21, 2013

Board of County Commissioners
Cass County Courthouse
211 9th Street South
Fargo, ND 58103

Re: Office of County Coroner

Dear Commissioners:

As requested, please find attached some statistics concerning cases handled by the coroner's office in 2011, 2012, and the first 9 months of 2013.

In the past 2 years there has been an average of 23 cases per month with a high of 31 cases in a month. Half of the cases investigated were determined to be natural deaths. There was an average of 2.5 and as high as 7 accidental deaths per month. There was an average of 2 suicides per month. From my memory of the number of cases in past years, the work load of the office is continually increasing.

Seventy-five percent of the cases in which law enforcement was involved were with the Fargo Police department. The Fargo Police provided us with extra analysis of the cases in which they were involved and found a fairly even distribution over the hours of the day, with a trend towards more cases between midnight and 7:00 AM. They were also distributed fairly evenly over all seven days of the week and quarters of the year.

Looking at the detail of our monthly statistics, there are some days with no reported deaths, however there are also days with up to five cases in a day. Every case requires time for investigation, analysis, and processing of information. I am proud of the professional work done by my deputy coroners who are certified death investigators. They provide high quality work and are asked to do much with very little provided for them. We interact with the public and depend on the cooperation of many agencies and businesses to accomplish our work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John R. Baird".

John R. Baird, MD, MPH
Cass County Coroner

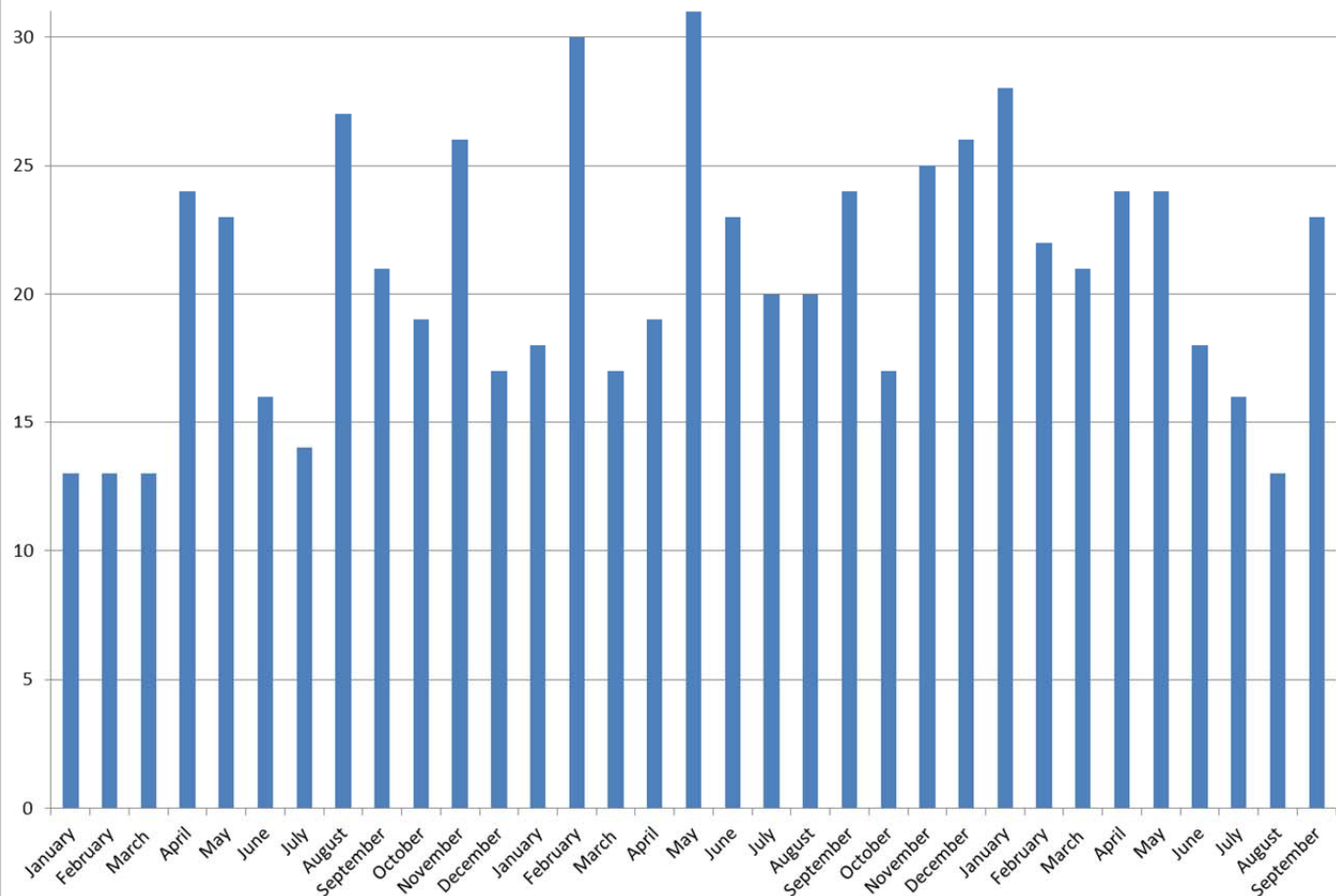
Cass County Coroner Cases

	Total Cases	Manner of Death						Autopsy	Law Enforcement		
		Natural	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Undeterm ined	Cremation		FPD	CCSO	WFPD
2011											
January	13	9	1	3	0	0	0	4	5	5	1
February	13	9	1	0	0	3	0	0	5	2	0
March	13	8	1	3	0	0	1	2	7	1	1
April	24	13	2	3	0	2	4	5	7	3	0
May	23	13	4	3	0	2	1	5	5	4	2
June	16	9	4	0	0	1	2	3	7	3	2
July	14	9	3	1	0	0	1	5	8	0	0
August	27	21	6	0	0	0	0	2	13	1	3
September	21	9	1	2	1	0	8	5	9	1	1
October	19	12	3	0	0	1	3	1	6	2	1
November	26	14	7	2	0	0	3	5	10	2	1
December	17	7	2	2	0	1	5	4	5	3	1
Total 2011	226	133	35	19	1	10	28	41	87	27	13
2012											
January	18	6	2	1	1	0	8	4	3	1	0
February	30	16	3	4	0	0	7	5	10	1	2
March	17	8	0	1	1	1	6	3	6	0	2
April	19	7	1	3	0	1	7	5	9	2	0
May	31	16	3	2	0	4	6	10	16	0	0
June	23	7	3	1	1	5	6	3	8	1	2
July	20	8	2	1	1	1	7	5	4	1	2
August	20	8	3	3	1	1	4	4	7	0	2
September	24	13	4	2	1	0	4	8	15	1	2
October	17	7	4	1	0	0	5	3	6	2	0
November	25	7	1	3	0	3	11	6	9	9	1
December	26	14	3	2	0	0	7	5	11	2	2
Total 2012	270	117	29	24	6	16	78	61	104	20	15

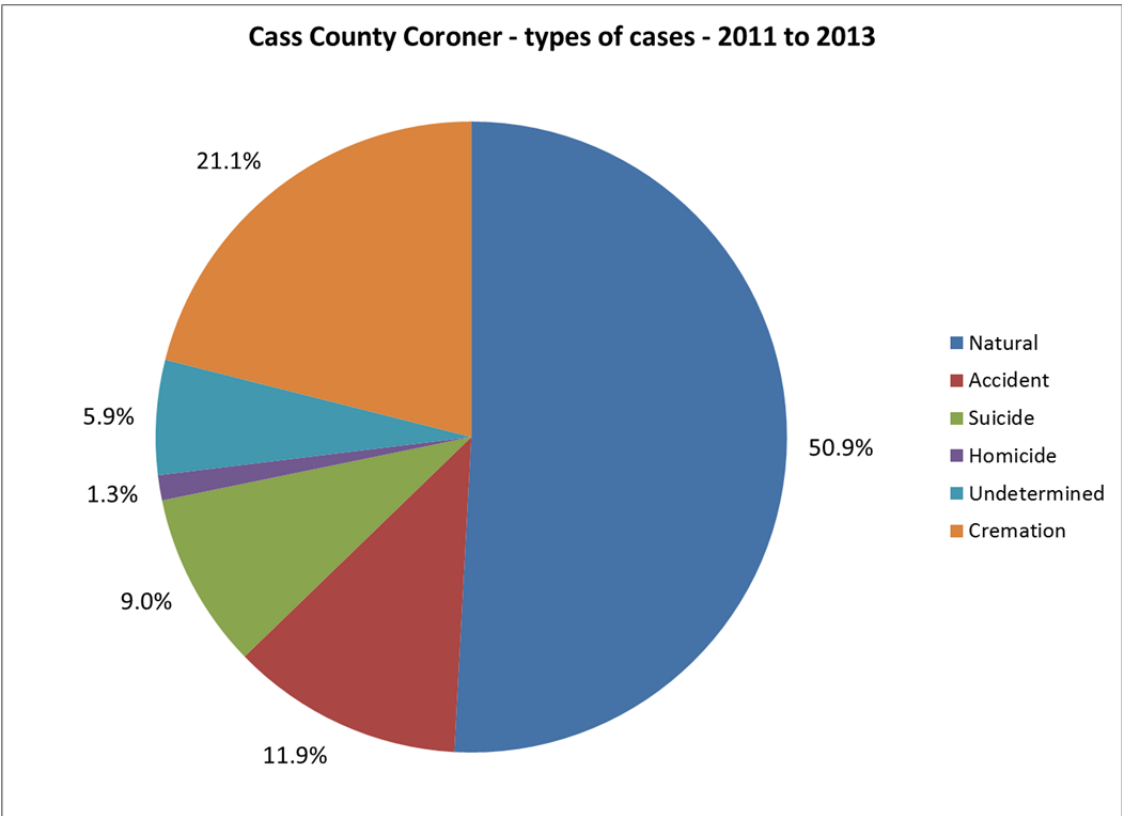
Cass County Coroner Cases

	Cases	Manner of Death						Autopsy	Law Enforcement		
		Natural	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Undeterm			FPD	CCSO	WFPD
						ined	Cremation				
2013											
January	28	16	2	5	0	1	4	8	10	3	2
February	22	11	2	1	1	2	5	6	8	0	0
March	21	10	2	1	0	3	5	4	6	0	1
April	24	12	4	4	0	1	3	11	13	0	3
May	24	12	3	2	1	0	6	5	9	1	1
June	18	9	2	3	0	1	3	4	7	1	0
July	16	10	1	0	0	0	5	1	5	0	2
August	13	4	2	3	0	1	3	4	7	2	0
September	23	16	0	1	0	0	6	4	10	1	1
October	13	5	1	0	0	6	1	1	6	0	0
November	0										
December	0										
Total 2013	202	105	19	20	2	15	41	48	81	8	10
Total to Date	698	355	83	63	9	41	147	150	272	55	38
2 years & 9 months											
		Natural	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Undeterm	Cremation		FPD	CCSO	WFPD
		50.9%	11.9%	9.0%	1.3%	5.9%	21.1%		74.5%	15.1%	10.4%

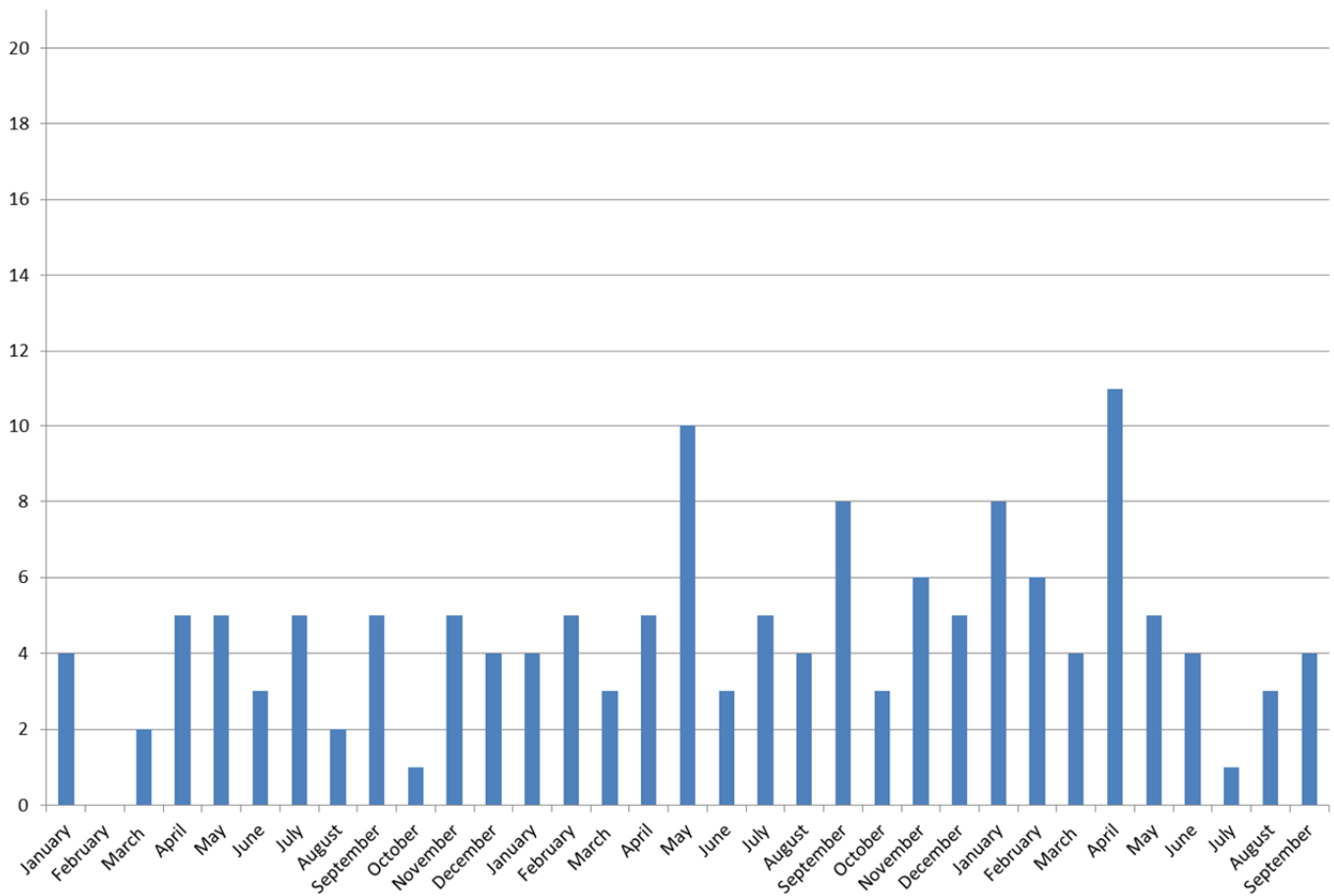
Cass County Coroner - Total cases 2011 to 2013



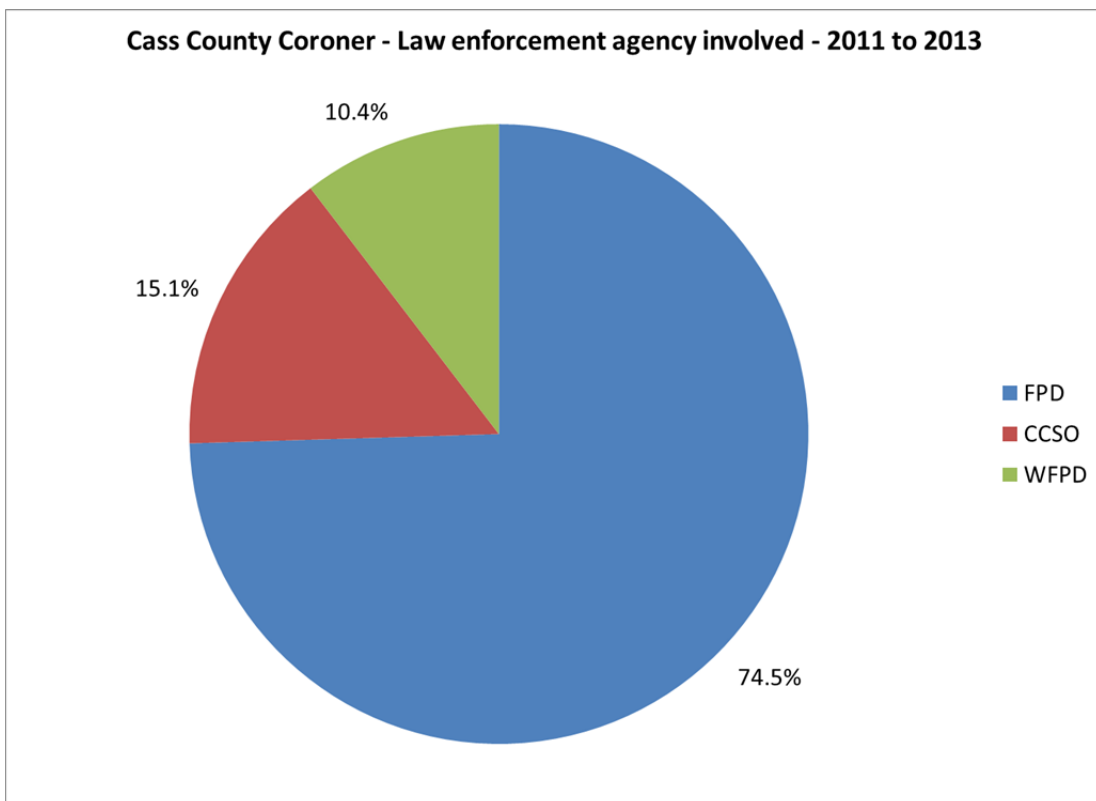
Cass County Coroner - types of cases - 2011 to 2013



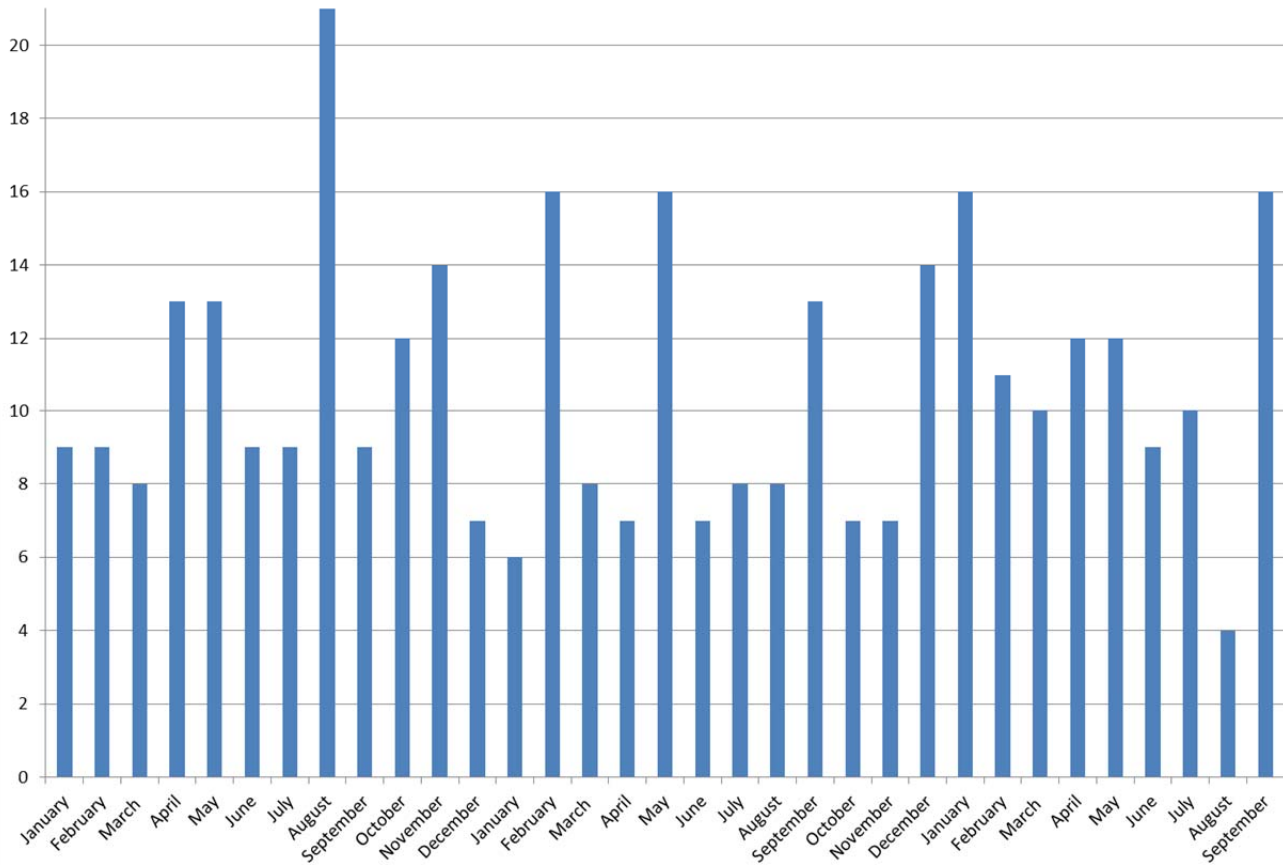
Cass County Coroner - Autopsies 2011 to 2013



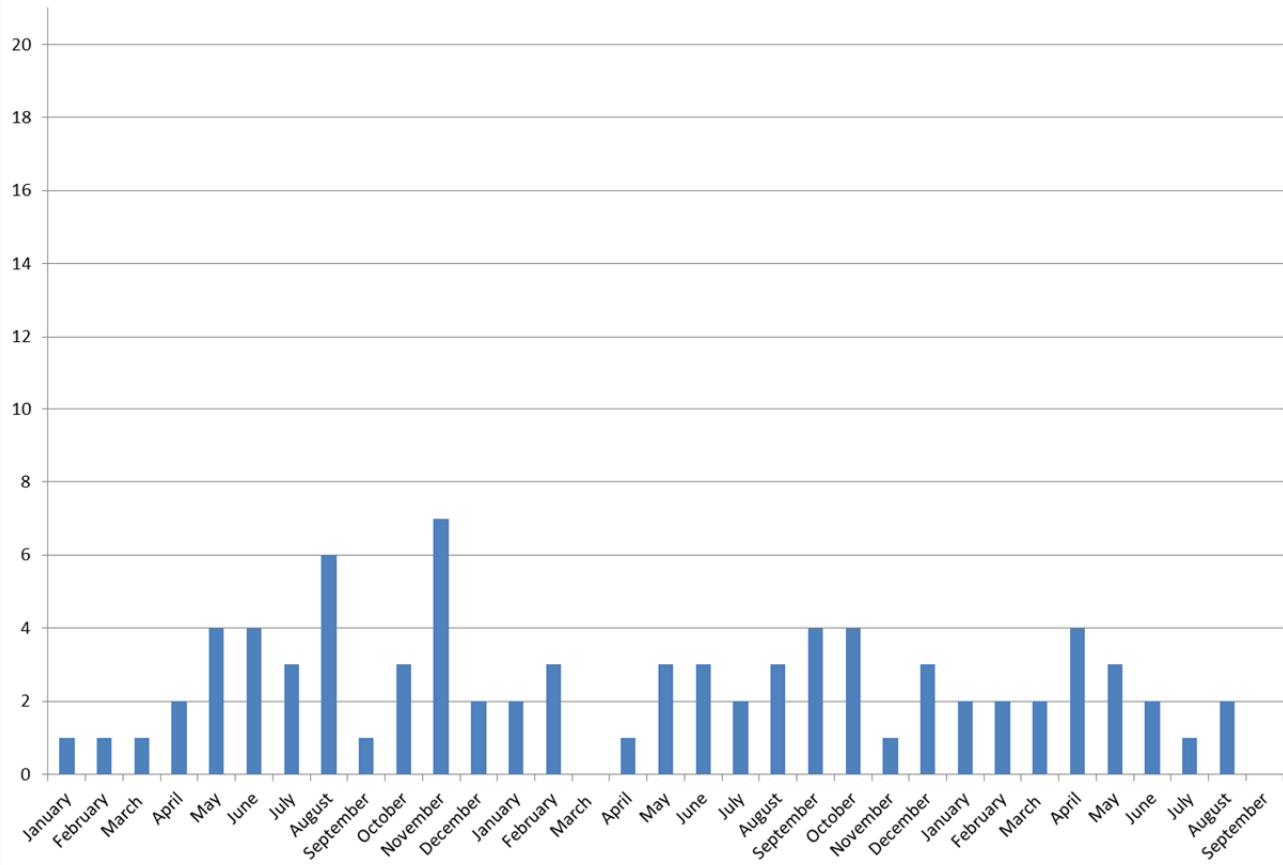
Cass County Coroner - Law enforcement agency involved - 2011 to 2013



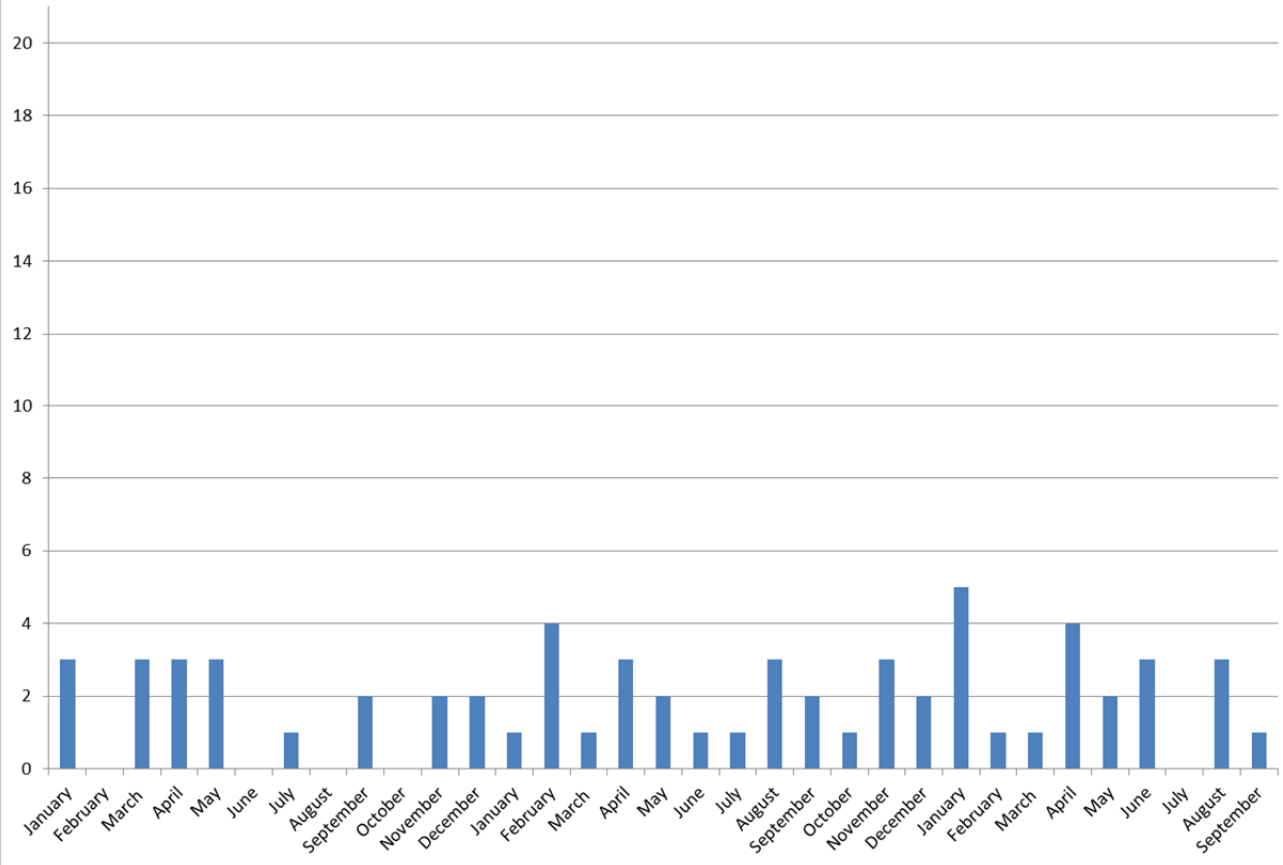
Cass County Coroner - Natural deaths 2011 to 2013



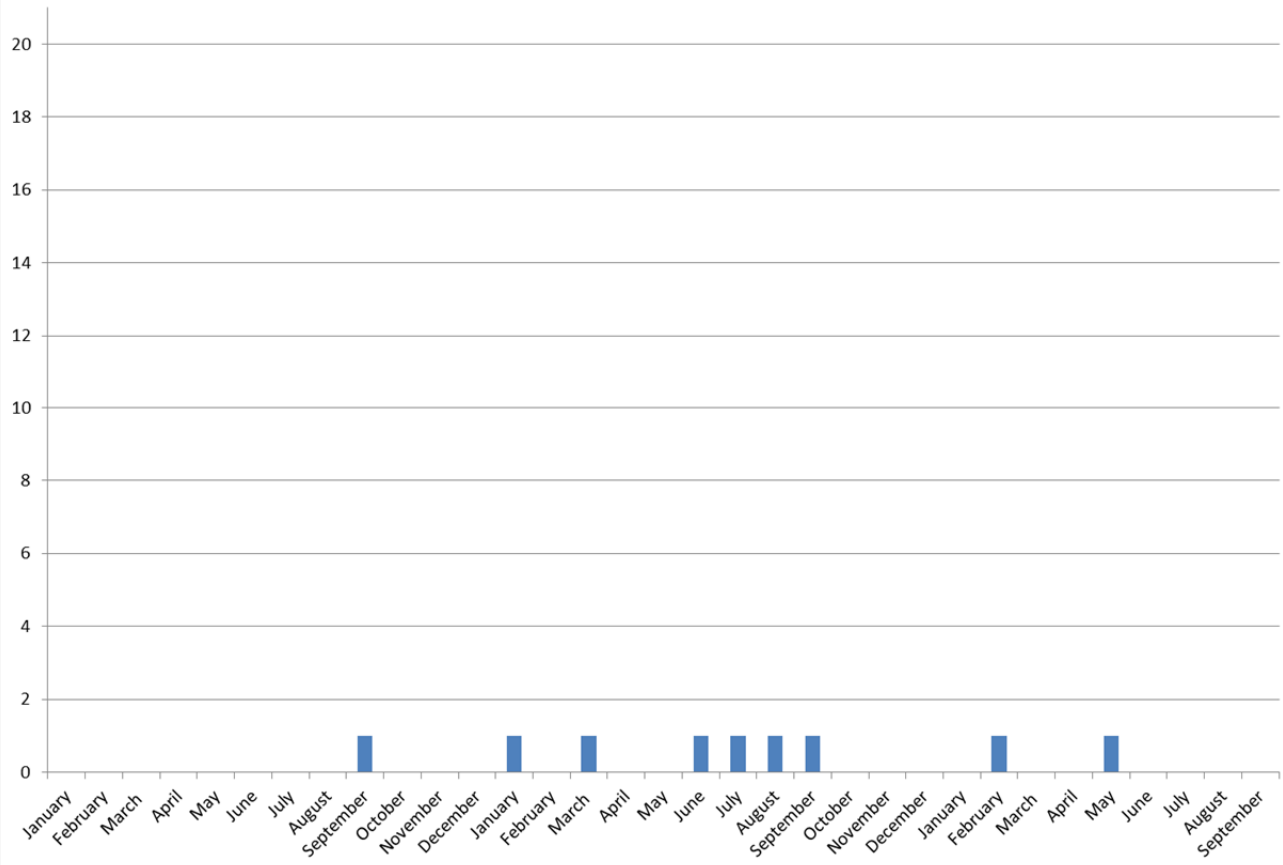
Cass County Coroner - Accidental deaths 2011 to 2013



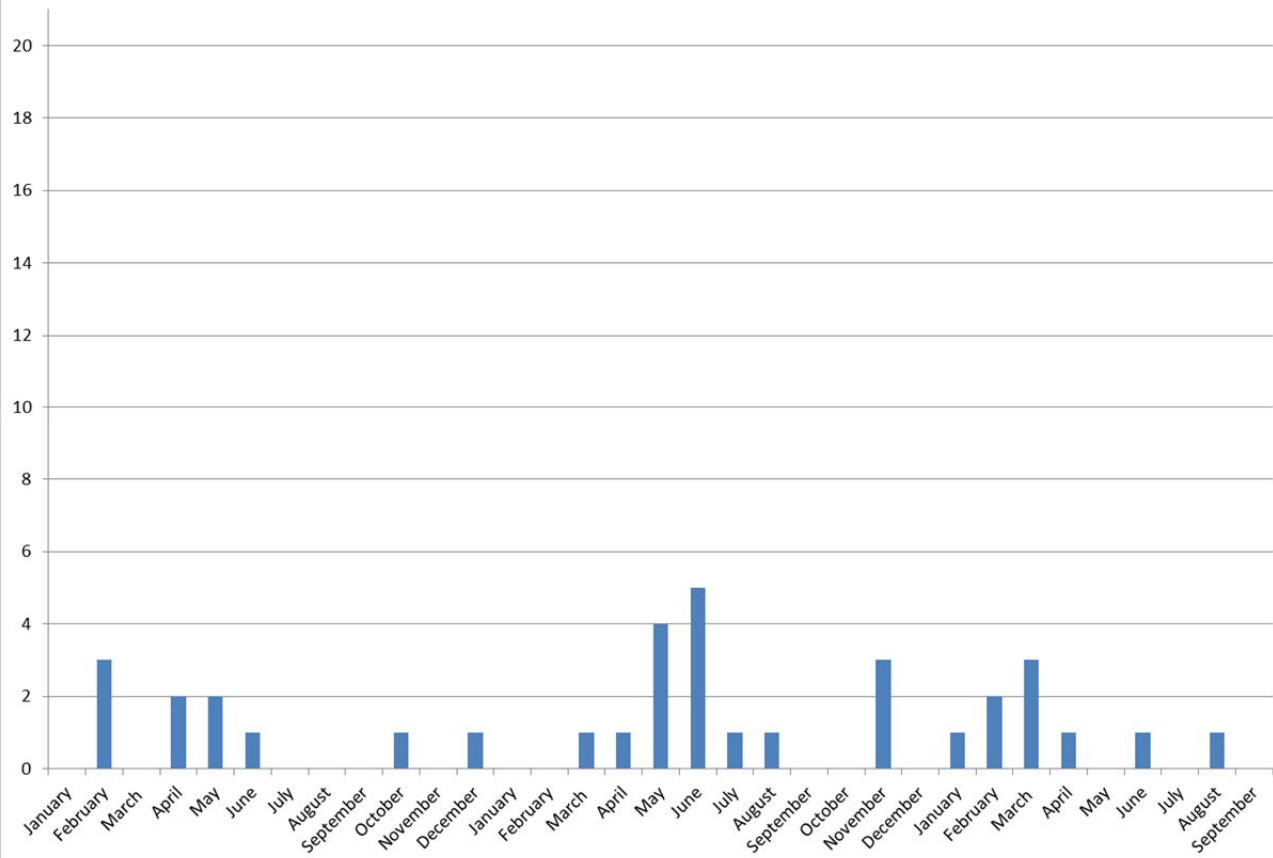
Cass County Coroner - Suicide deaths 2011 to 2013



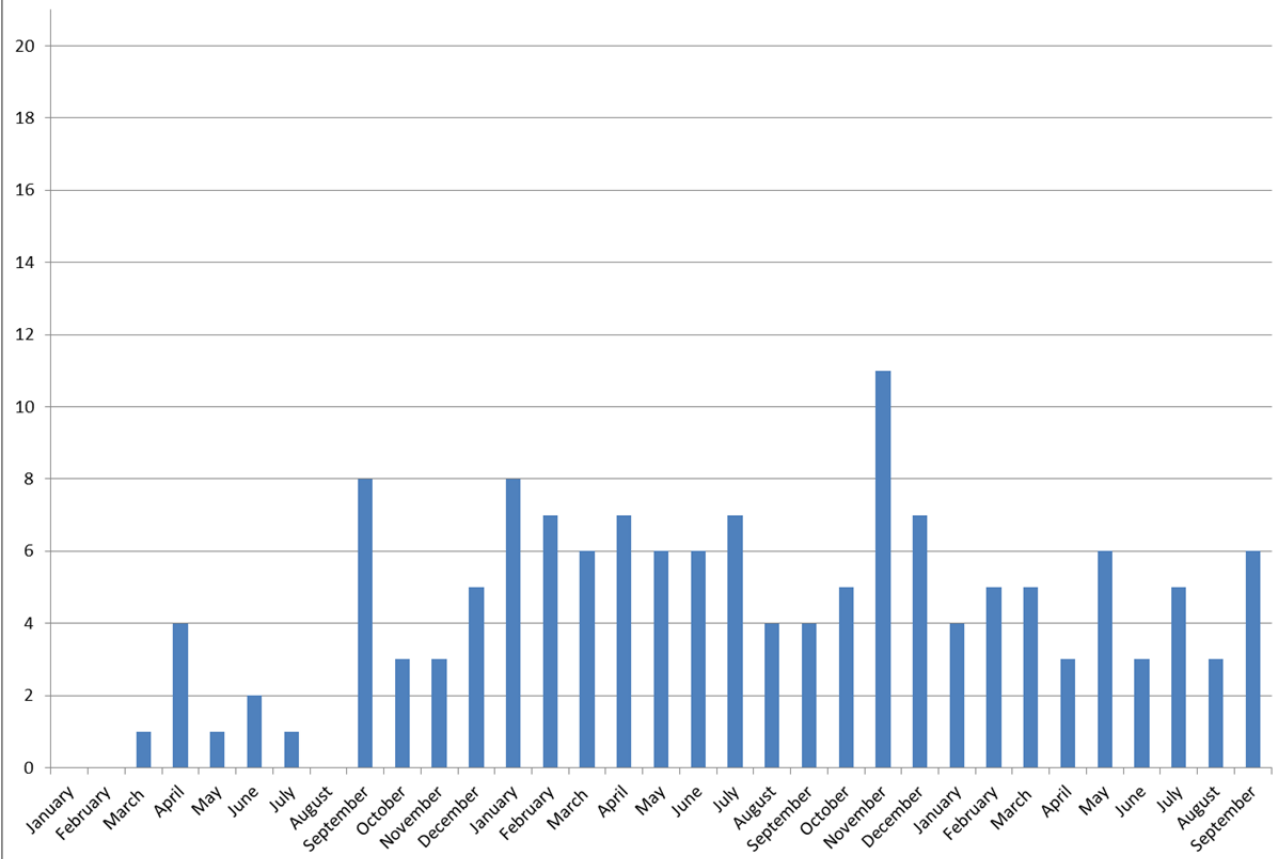
Cass County Coroner - Homicide deaths 2011 to 2013



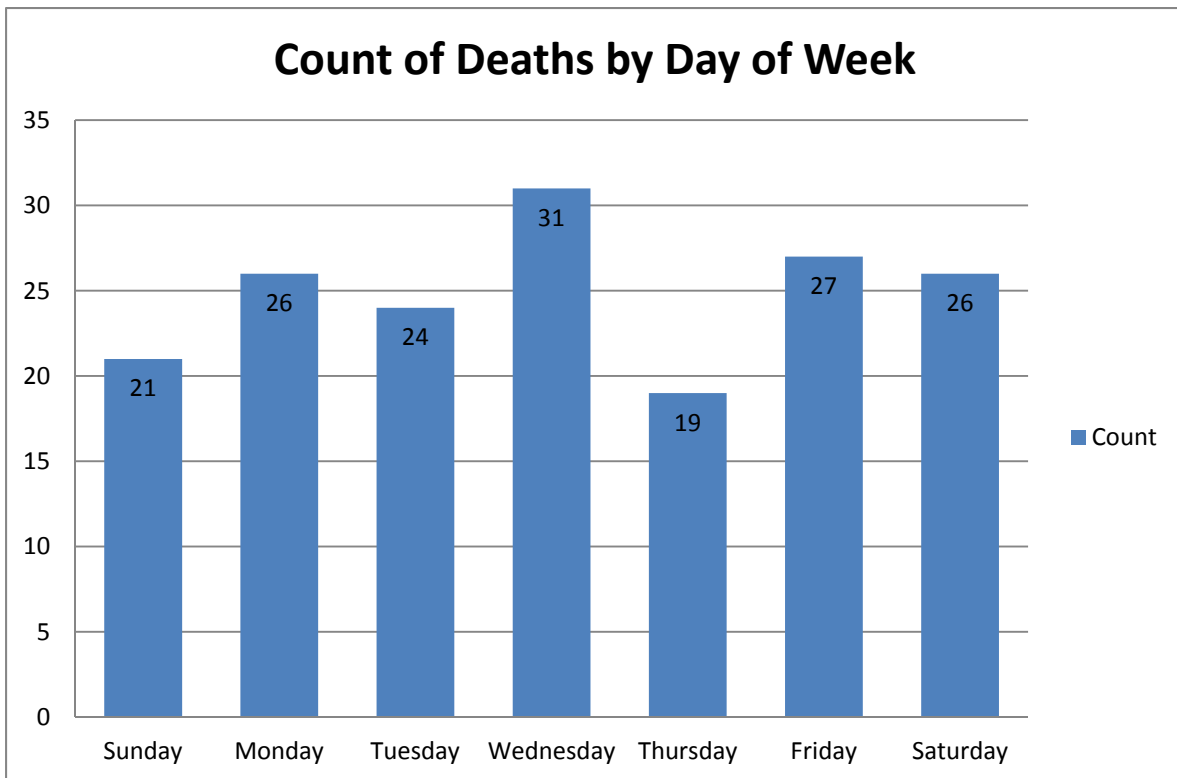
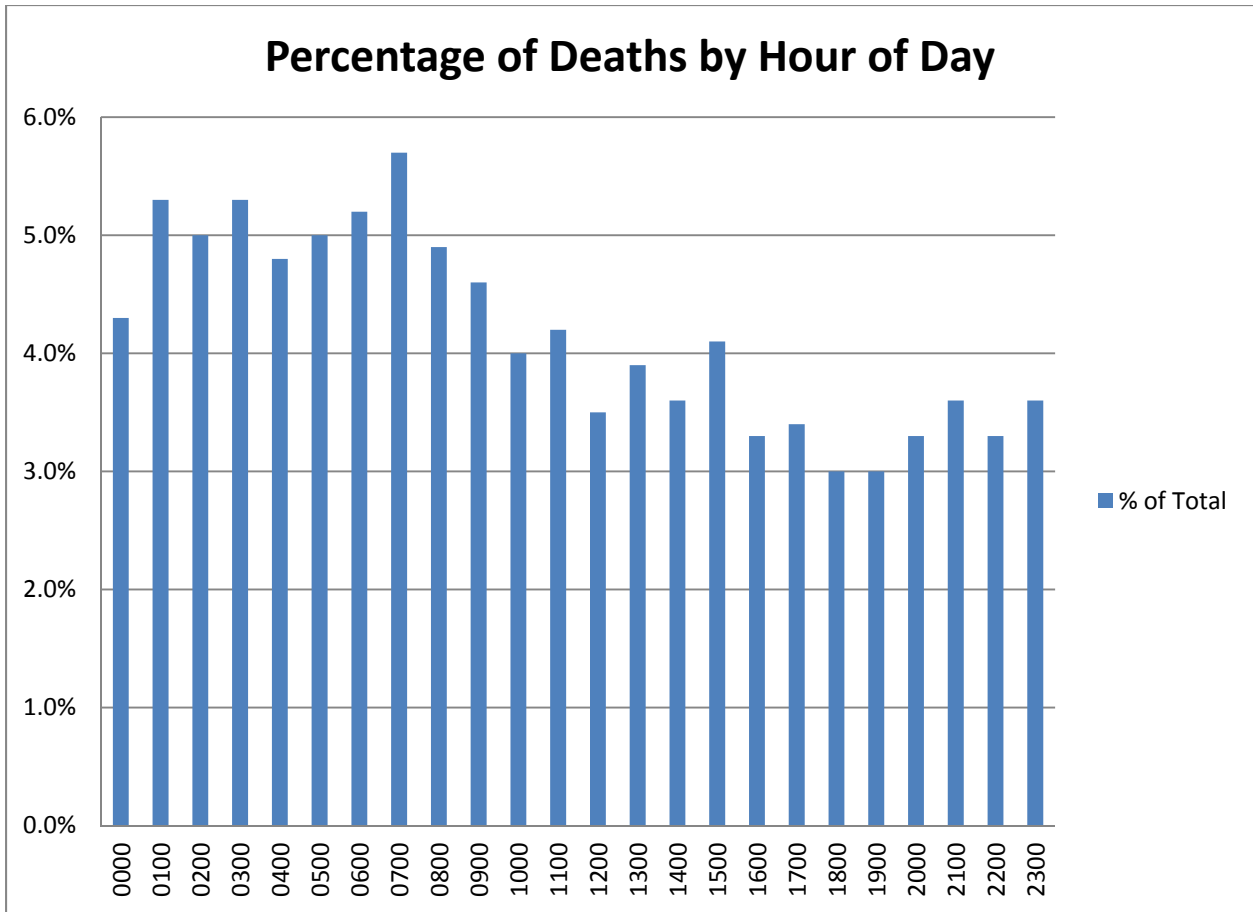
Cass County Coroner - Undetermined cause deaths 2011 to 2013



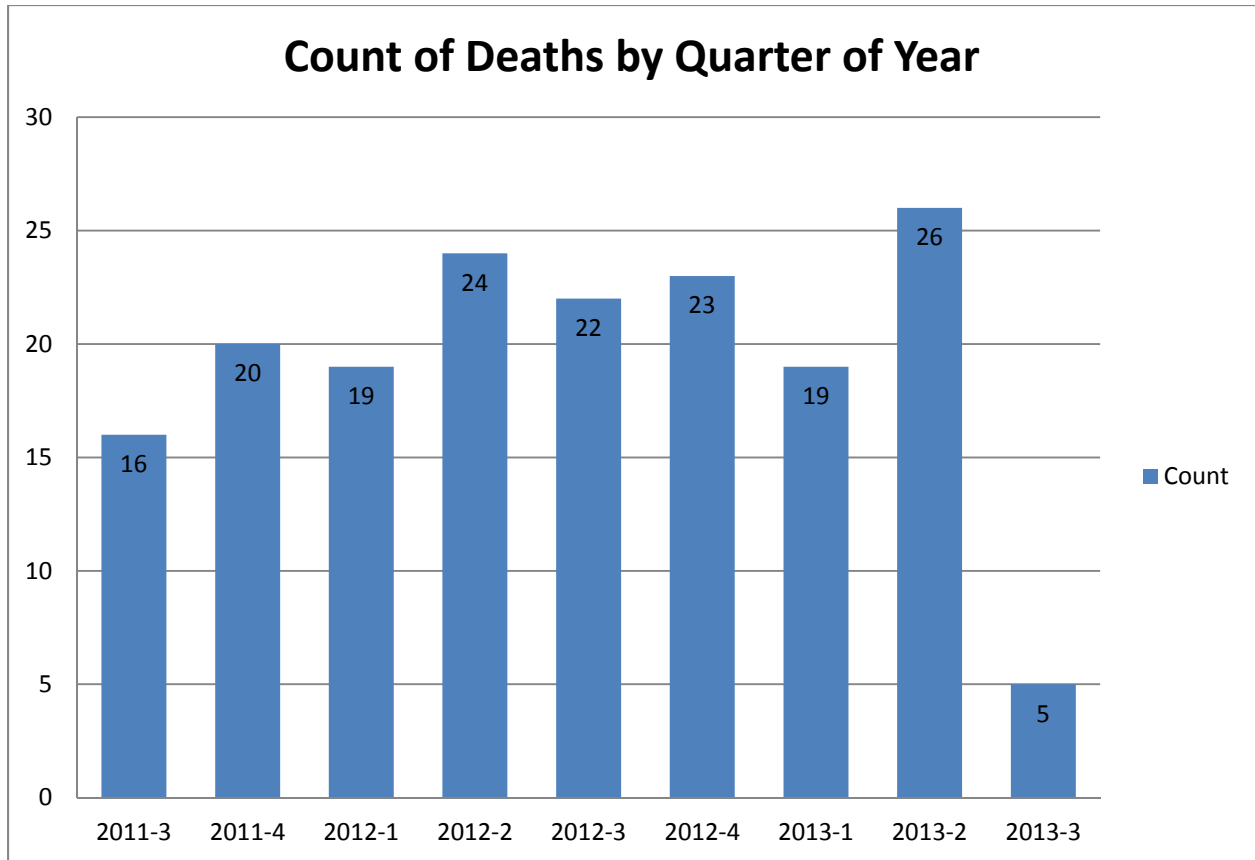
Cass County Coroner - Cremation authorizations 2011 to 2013



Information provided by Fargo Police Department - their cases 8/1/11 to 8/1/13



Information provided by Fargo Police Department - their cases 8/1/11 to 8/1/13



Information from 8/1/11 to 8/1/13

230 Deaths (Homicides, Suicides, Traffic Fatalities, Unattended)

Averages to 0.315 deaths per day or 1 death every 3.18 days.



RECEIVED

OCT 3 2013

October 3, 2013

CASS COUNTY COMMISSION

Auditor

Michael Montplaisir, CPA
701-241-5601

Treasurer

Charlotte Sandvik
701-241-5611

Director of Equalization

Frank Klein
701-241-5616

Board of County Commissioners
Cass County Courthouse
211 9th Street South
Fargo ND 58103

Re: County Coroner's Office

Dear Commissioners:

The committee appointed to look at the County Coroner's Office in connection with the 2014 budget met again on September 25th to re-look at staffing and associated pay. We discussed how the office currently works and how death investigators are paid. Some of those issues are:

The duties of the Coroner's Office need to be covered 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, 52 weeks a year. It is not an 8 to 5 office and there is not work for the investigators to do 40 hours a week within the office, although some office time is necessary to complete reports, compile statistics, return phone calls, etc. The bulk of their time is spent on call, and while they can do other duties while on call, they have to be available to respond to phone calls and scenes at any time.

The staff that works in the Coroner's Office are like other county employees—they need stability in their pay, protection of insurance coverage, computers, printers, copier, scanner, office supplies, and office space that all employees need to complete their jobs. In addition, since their time is spent mainly outside the office, they need cell phones and access to a vehicle suitable for the work they are asked to perform. And long term, they need space that is unique to a Coroner's Office.

After discussing the death investigator positions, the committee voted unanimously to create two positions—one full-time and one three-quarters time. The full-time position would be expected to have some office hours in order for the office to be staffed for a portion of the normal work week. The three-quarters position would be on call. The full-time position would work the 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. shift and every other weekend, and the three-quarters position would work the 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift and every other weekend. The evening position would also spend some time during normal work hours, making or returning phone calls that have to be done when other people are in their offices.

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Fargo, North Dakota 58103

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The other issues regarding temporary office space until a decision is made on permanent space and access to a vehicle are the same as when it was discussed in September. The county has space vacated by the Information Technology Department on the second floor of the original courthouse with office furniture. The office will need a printer, scanner, and telephone. There is very little cost to the county to provide this space, and if we don't use the space, District Court will most likely make a request to use the space.

The county is able to provide a suitable vehicle or vehicles. There are two vans in the motor pool currently used by Social Services that will need to be replaced soon—one has 137,403 miles and the other 138,006. The county averages about 1,000 miles per month on each of these vehicles to transport children. While these are in great operating condition, it is time we start looking at replacing them and either sell them or keep them in the motor pool. We do have sufficient dollars in the motor pool fund (funded by use charges to departments) to replace one or both vans. With some modification (taking out the seats and perhaps covering the carpet with a hard surface), it would seem that one of these vehicles would work for the Coroner's Office. The Coroner's Office would pay the same per mile rental fee that is charged to other departments that use the vehicles. The county will take care of the gas and maintenance costs, as we do with all motor pool vehicles.

The commission approved a 2014 budget of \$189,856 for the Coroner's Office. The budgeted amount is sufficient to pay for two death investigators to become county employees; provide unused office space with the remaining furniture from when Information Technology was housed in this location; and provide a used motor pool vehicle.

Sincerely,



Michael Montplaisir, CPA
Cass County Auditor

SUGGESTED MOTIONS:

- 1) Move to employ the current Death Investigators from the Coroner's Office as county employees effective November 1, 2013 with one being full time and one being three quarter time – being exempt level employees they would not be eligible for overtime or holiday pay.
- 2) Move to allocate the former Information Technology space on the second floor of the original courthouse for the interim Coroner's Office.
- 3) Move to provide a van from the motor pool for the Coroner's office with the normal billing for the use of the van.

**CORONER'S COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 3, 2013---1:00 PM**

1. MEETING TO ORDER

A meeting of the Coroner's Committee was held on Monday, September 3, 2013, at 1:00 PM in the Commission Conference Room, Cass County Courthouse, with the following present: County Administrator Keith Berndt; Cass County Sheriff Paul D. Laney; County Auditor Michael Montplaisir; County Commissioner Chad Peterson; County Commissioner Mary Scherling; IT Director Terry Schmaltz; County Coroner Dr. John Baird; Fargo Police Chief Keith Ternes; and Fargo Police Detective Pat Claus.

2. BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Montplaisir said the preliminary 2014 budget for the Coroner was passed by the Commission. Final approval will take place on September 16.

3. CORONER'S UPDATE

Dr. Baird said he has served as the County Coroner since 1983. In the past 10 years he has used death investigators, as due to low pay and work load it is difficult to obtain physicians for this work. Currently, he has two deputy coroners; one is a full-time deputy and also handles the clerical work. Dr. Baird is currently paying the equivalent of a full-time deputy coroner to cover the office hours plus on-call, while the other is paid on call-pay. Mr. Montplaisir included funding for 1.75 employee positions in the 2014 Coroner's Budget. Between Dr. Baird and the two deputies they alternate covering a 24/7 rotation. The deputies keep track of their hours and are paid \$7 per hour. At this time, the deputy coroner's are considered to be contracted, and are paid out of the Coroner's county budget.

At this time, the deputy coroner's do not receive any benefits and are not covered by the county's Worker's Compensation. This is very risky due to the nature of the work, however, Worker's Compensation will not cover the deputy coroner's as they are not on the county's payroll. Sheriff Laney said the deputy coroners need to be covered under Worker's Compensation due to the nature of their work.

Mr. Montplaisir said a PAQ for the Deputy Coroner position was sent to Fox Lawson to be classified and has been graded at a C43 grade. A plan for on-call pay for the deputy coroners still needs to be determined.

4. DEPUTY CORONER OFFICE SPACE

Dr. Baird said the deputy coroners have been working out of their homes and using their personal vehicles for making calls and doing investigations. Mr. Montplaisir said there is space in the Courthouse which can be configured to provide office space for the deputy coroners. The City of Fargo will also have space available in the Fargo-Cass Public Health building on 13th Avenue when the renovation is complete in 2015. The City of Fargo will have to know in the near future if the Coroner's Office will be located in the Fargo-Cass Public Health building so they can draft their renovation plans accordingly.

Dr. Baird said they need to become more efficient and develop a better database. Mr. Schmaltz said it would be more difficult to keep the coroner database on the county

system if they offsite, and he would need to coordinate with the City of Fargo as there will be issues with cross networking. Also, he does not favor having any type of information or equipment connected to a network he does not manage. Mrs. Scherling said in considering costs, it is important to transfer files correctly by going paperless sooner rather than later to save the cost of doing so down the road. Mr. Schmaltz said if and when a decision is made to have the Deputy Coroner's Office in the Fargo-Cass Public Health building he would like to be involved in the network planning process.

Mr. Claus said the workload for the coroner's staff has become so vast, having a full-time staff available will only allow local law enforcement agencies to become more proficient and efficient. Chief Ternes said Cass County is past due in having a full-time death investigator as the population of Cass County continues to grow. Dr. Baird said both death coroners have proper credentials and to obtain this same service through UND Medical School would cost approximately \$3 per Cass County resident per year.

Mr. Claus said in the future it would be beneficial to have the ability to store bodies and have a medical examiner come to the facility for autopsies instead of shipping the bodies out. Dr. Baird said currently autopsies are not done in Fargo, however, that may be a possibility in the future. Sheriff Laney said legislative action in the 2013 session has allowed UND Medical School to do autopsies, eliminating the need to transport bodies to Bismarck.

Mr. Peterson said for the time being, it would be most advantageous to house a Deputy Coroner's office in the Courthouse and bring the deputy coroners on staff as employees. In moving forward decisions can be made regarding where to house the office once the deputy coroners are established.

Mr. Montplaisir said he has had conversations with Fargo City Administrator Pat Zavoral regarding costs and arrangements for paying, and who will assume certain costs. Chief Ternes said the County Coroner is a county function; however, approximately 80% of their work is within the city. Mr. Berndt said Mr. Zavoral is open for discussions regarding space rental and fit-up costs for coroner space should the decision be made to move the office to the Fargo-Cass Public Health building. A subcommittee consisting of some committee members will meet with city staff, a city commissioner, a city commissioner, and the architect to develop a recommendation on the space.

Dr. Baird said it is difficult for his staff to work from separate locations and there needs to be a plan in place as the city moves forward with renovating the space which will house Fargo-Cass Public Health.

The committee was in agreement to recommend to the County Commission that office space in the Courthouse be provided for a Deputy Coroner's office on a temporary basis until a decision is made for a permanent office site.

5. TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE

Dr. Baird said in the future, they would like to consider obtaining a vehicle for body transportation as well as a site for body storage. Currently, local funeral homes are

assisting with transportation and storage; however, this is not a function for the funeral homes to be performing. Mr. Montplaisir said the county fleet vehicles are rotated on a regular basis and there are two mini vans used by Social Services of which one could be converted to a coroner's vehicle and a replacement vehicle could be obtained for Social Services. Mileage would be billed out monthly to the Coroner's Office.

The committee was in agreement to convert one of the County mini vans for use as a coroner's vehicle.

6. DEPUTIES CORONER'S START DATE

Mr. Montplaisir said he would like to bring the deputy coroner's on board as staff on October 1st. There are funds available in the 2013 Coroner's Budget to cover the expenses. Mr. Montplaisir and Mr. Berndt will review the policy for any changes that need to be addressed.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting at adjourned at 2:12 PM.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Stoick, Principal Secretary

**CORONER'S OFFICE DISCUSSION
SEPTEMBER 23, 2013-1:00 PM**

1. MEETING TO ORDER

An informal meeting regarding the County Coroner Office was held on Monday, September 23, 2013, at 1:00 PM in the Commission Conference Room, Cass County Courthouse, with the following present: County Administrator Keith Berndt; Cass County Commissioner Ken Pawluk; Cass County Commissioner Vern Bennett; Cass County Commissioner Mary Scherling; Cass County States Attorney Birch Burdick; Cass County Death Investigator Kriste Ross; Cass County Coroner Dr. John Baird; Dr. Mary Ann Sens, UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences; Larry Boulger; John Runsvold; and Alex Reidel.

2. CORONER'S UPDATE

Mr. Pawluk explained that at the September 16th County Commission meeting, the commissioners were approached and asked to provide office space to be used by the deputy coroners; provide the Coroner with a vehicle to be used for death investigations and transport bodies; and to make the two deputy coroners Cass County employees beginning October 1st.

Mr. Pawluk said it is difficult to make a decision for this matter without having a full understanding of the situation. Therefore, he has asked for this meeting in an effort to gain a better understanding of the role of the Coroner staff.

Dr. Sens distributed a Report and Recommendations Prepared by the Systems Infrastructure Committee of the Scientific Working Group on Medicolegal Death Investigation, which is titled, "Regional Medicolegal Autopsy and Death Investigation Centers-Construction, Staffing, and Costs" which outlines the regional costs for autopsy and death investigation centers. She explained that the Coroner acts as the Public Health Officer in the community which is an extremely important role in the community. The Coroner and Deputy Coroners work closely with families of the deceased as well as play an important role in the public health sector.

Mr. Pawluk said a decision needs to be made if the Coroner will be part of the Sheriff's Office, the States Attorney's Office, or be an individual department. A policy regarding the Coroner's Office hours and staffing will also need to be addressed. A plan regarding record keeping and storage will be needed, and a decision needs to be made whether the Coroner's Office will be moved in with Fargo Cass Public Health when they move to their new facility on 13th Avenue in Fargo in 2015.

Dr. Sens said the Coroner's Office should be independent and act as their own department. She said due to the nature of their work there needs to be a wall of independence from the Sheriff's Office as well as the States Attorney's Office.

Mr. Burdick said the Coroner is an appointed position and is appointed for a 5-year term by the Commissioners. They operate independently; however, their budget line item has been under the State's Attorney which has no relevance as they could have their own budget.

Dr. Baird said one of the greatest concerns at this time is the fact that the death investigators are not covered by worker's compensation. Another, issue is without an office there is no central location for receiving mail, fax, record keeping, and storing needed equipment and supplies.

Mrs. Scherling questioned the number of hours the deputy coroners work. Dr. Baird said they are not paid an hourly wage, the budget is divided by call coverage and they have not done statistics regarding the hours worked as it is extremely difficult to track hours for death investigators. Dr. Sens cautioned getting into a position where death investigating becomes about the hours worked.

Dr. Sens does not have a separate office used for her Coroner duties as she uses her office at UND. Burleigh County pays their Coroner a stipend and when he is away he finds coverage and pays for coverage out of his budget. His office is under the Burleigh County Sheriff's Office.

Mr. Boulger said as a local funeral home they feel an obligation to assist the community. Sometimes, identifying the deceased and notifying the next of kin can be an issue. Funeral homes do not provide investigative services, and when identification is an issue, holding the deceased can also be a problem. Ms. Ross said a cold storage facility for the Coroner's Office would alleviate this issue with the funeral homes. Mr. Pawluk asked if the state medical examiner could provide this service. Dr. Sens said they cannot. Mr. Pawluk also questioned why there would be a need to hold the deceased and not just have the deceased cremated in cases where identification is difficult. Dr. Sens said this is an area of great liability and one you do not want to enter. Dr. Baird said there is a responsibility with holding the deceased and that increases when there is no storage, and the responsibility is transferred to the funeral home as they provide the storage. Mr. Boulger said they are not equipped to hold bodies.

Dr. Baird said they have an agreement with the funeral homes for the removal of a body from the scene for which the funeral home is paid \$200, if the family doesn't pay. Mr. Bennett asked to what degree the county would assume responsibility in not taking business from the funeral home. Dr. Baird said the removal and storage of the deceased is done by the funeral home as a service to the Coroner's Office and is really beyond their responsibility. If bodies are transported to Grand Forks, the funeral homes are paid \$225 for transportation costs.

Dr. Sens said having a proper facility has many advantages including when families want to make tissue donations. The harvesting can be done on site and the donation bank is charged a fee for the use of the facility. It is one method of recouping some of the dollars spent.

Mr. Pawluk asked the local funeral directors to think about if they would consider continuing their service with the Coroner. Furthermore, he asked for Dr. Baird to provide a copy of the Coroner's contract with the county and data on the number of death calls they receive. Dr. Baird said they do not have a contract with the county.

Mrs. Scherling asked for data detailing the total number of hours the deputy coroners

spend on death investigations and the work that accompanies that. Ms. Ross said that is very difficult data to determine as each case is individual and time is difficult to compute. Dr. Baird said they can compile some data; however, their main focus is to provide quality service and to have an office which is functioning properly with proper equipment.

Dr. Sens said each county should do one autopsy for per 1,000 capita per year. Therefore, if Cass County has 150,000 residents; 150 autopsies should be performed on unattended deaths each year. Also, each county should plan to spend about two dollars per resident per year for local, legal, and medical death investigative services, however, Dr. Sens suggested that Cass County budget \$3.80 per resident per year to cover all costs including autopsies. She said autopsies are a public health issue and autopsies go beyond determining the cause of death, they also determine if the death was caused by an issue which could cause a public health risk. Dr. Baird said getting autopsies performed in the past has been an issue due to the overload of cases in Bismarck and many times they have been declined.

Dr. Sens commended Dr. Baird and his deputy coroners for their work. She said North Dakota has five certified death investigators and two of those are in Cass County. She said the budget should include dollars for certifications and continuing education. Mr. Bennett also commended Dr. Baird for the work his office does.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting at adjourned at 2:22 PM.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Stoick, Principal Secretary

**CORONER'S COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 25, 2013---9:30 AM**

1. MEETING TO ORDER

A meeting of the Coroner's Committee was held on Wednesday, September 25, 2013, at 9:30 AM in the Commission Conference Room, Cass County Courthouse, with the following present: County Administrator Keith Berndt; County Auditor Michael Montplaisir; County Commissioner Mary Scherling; County Coroner Dr. John Baird; and Commissioner Chad Peterson via conference call. Absent were: Cass County Sheriff Paul D. Laney, and Cass County States Attorney Birch Burdick.

Also present were: Kriste Ross, Cass County Death Investigator and Doug Murphy, Fargo Cass Public Health.

2. DEPUTY CORONER'S, Discussion/Action

Mr. Montplaisir said the Cass County Commission appointed a committee to research what to pay the death investigators and where their office space should be located. In researching this topic throughout the region it was found that there are no consistencies among Coroner's Offices. A decision needs to be made regarding what level of services the residents of Cass County expect and deserve from the Coroner.

Dr. Baird said it has been the practice in this area to appoint a physician to serve as the County Coroner. Dr. Baird gave a brief history on the Coroner's Office saying that in the beginning, five physicians worked as a team sharing the duties. However, as time passed one by one each of the physicians with the exception of Dr. Baird dropped out of the team. He said it is difficult to find a physician that has the knowledge and interest in death investigation. Therefore, Dr. Baird has found it most advantageous to use death investigators to assist him. Both of the Cass County death investigators have taken extensive training and are certified. Furthermore, when Dr. Baird makes the decision to step down from the position, it may be difficult to find a physician to assume the Coroner's duties if there is not an established office. In the past, death investigators have been considered to be contracted but, a point has been reached where they need to be paid a salary and have office space.

Mr. Montplaisir distributed a review of coroner's budgets including expenses for like sized counties in the region. It was found that budgets and accommodations for office space vary from county to county.

Dr. Baird said he has been paying the death investigators out of his county budget and dividing it according to the call schedule. The death investigators track their call hours and are paid \$7.25 per hour for call. Call schedules are set from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM and 7:00 PM to 7:00 AM with alternating weekends and holidays. Dr. Baird also receives a small administrative fee and Ms. Ross is paid \$500 a month for clerical work. The death investigators do not receive additional pay for being called out. The on-call investigator goes to the scene and handles the investigation, coordinating with law enforcement and the funeral home. The death investigators need to be compensated in a predictable manner. Ms. Ross said the greater concern is the lack of worker's compensation coverage. There are a number of steps involved in the investigation before the body can be moved to a funeral home.

Until September 1, 2013, all autopsies were performed in Bismarck, since that time the autopsies for the eastern half of the state have been moved to Grand Forks. This proved to be an issue at times due to the immense workload of the Bismarck facility. Many times autopsies could not be performed unless there was an absolute necessity for the autopsy.

The funeral home is paid by the family, for removal of the body; however, in cases where the

family is unable to pay the fee, the funeral home is paid \$200 by the coroner's office. In cases where the body has decomposition, the funeral home will still assist but, arrangements are made to remove the body from the funeral at the earliest possible time.

Mr. Montplaisir said it is important that we are in compliance with independent contractor regulations. In May, a Position Questionnaire Analysis (PAQ) for the Deputy Coroner position was sent to Fox Lawson for review and was graded at a C43 exempt status. Mr. Montplaisir distributed a summary of coroner's expenses from 2009 to 2013. He noted that the budget reflects Dr. Baird's careful attention to his budget. Mr. Montplaisir also prepared and presented a proposed 2014 budget assuming 1.75 positions at the paygrade established by Fox Lawson. The proposed budget also includes a family health insurance plan for both employees and computer equipment for the office. Dr. Baird said in the future he would like to research the possibility of adding staff to cover call for some weekends and holiday.

Mrs. Scherling said the Commission needs case figures for budgeting purposes. Ms. Ross said they have offered figures several times for that purpose. Mr. Murphy said it is difficult to track hours for the deputy coroner's positions because each case is unique and the hours are not computed by case load. Dr. Baird said with the number of cases they receive and a minimal staff it is difficult to find the time to compile figures for time spent on cases. There are so many variables with each case and each case is very different from the next.

Mrs. Scherling asked if the coroner has staff for transporting a body for autopsy. Dr. Baird said if they were provided a vehicle they would do some of the transporting to Grand Forks, however, not all of it. Mr. Montplaisir said he could replace one of the motor pool vans and provide the coroner with one of the current motor pool vans and bill the coroner for mileage.

MOTION, passed

Mr. Berndt moved and Mr. Peterson seconded to recommend to the County Commission that the two death investigators would become county employees, making one a full-time position and the other .75 and that they be graded on the paygrade scale as C43 as recommend by Fox Lawson and that they be exempt employees. On roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

At 10:34 AM the following individuals joined the meeting: Fargo Police Detective Pat Claus; Fargo City Administrator Pat Zavoral; and City of Fargo Finance Director Kent Costin.

Also present was: Richard Moorhead, Image Group Architecture & Interiors.

3. DEPUTY CORONER OFFICE SPACE

Mr. Zavoral said plans are moving forward for the Sunmart building located on 13th Avenue. Fargo-Cass Public Health will occupy a portion of the building and the City of Fargo Police Department will have a substation in that location. The plans include space for a Coroner's Office. Mr. Zavoral said as they move closer to the bidding process a decision regarding the proposed Coroner's Office needs to be made.

Mr. Montplaisir asked if there is a connection between public health and the coroner. Dr. Baird said there is no direct connection; however, it would be advantageous for a number of reasons to be located with the substation for the Fargo Police Department as they have a direct connection.

Mr. Zavoral distributed two maps outlining the proposed building use. Mr. Moorhead explained the proposed office layout including the projected space for the coroner. Mr. Claus said it is an advantage for the coroner and police department to be located together and it becomes more

cost effective when they have the ability to be in the same location as they work closely together. Mr. Zavoral said the bidding process is scheduled for November and once construction begins it should take about 12 months. Dr. Baird said if they had proper space LifeSource would have a site for harvesting tissue as there is a big demand for tissue. Mr. Montplaisir said when the city originally contacted Cass County about Coroner's Office space; they were urged to consider space that would suffice for a 20 year lifespan. Mr. Claus said one of the considerations in designing the facility is the ability to accommodate a mass casualty event. Mr. Costin said the city has transferred \$1 million into their general fund for the project and they are looking at financing options. Mr. Zavoral said the city would make arrangements for the county to have a payback plan if they put the Coroner's Office in the building. Mr. Zavoral said the city will need a decision on the coroner's space in the near future. Furthermore, the city would like to be reimbursed for a portion of the architects fees for drawing up the office space for the Coroner's Office.

Mr. Montplaisir said Sheriff Laney has asked to do a feasibility study for adding on to the jail and has questioned if the Coroner's Office could be located within the jail. Mrs. Scherling said she is uncomfortable having the Coroner's Office located outside a county facility as it is a county office. Ms. Ross said most cases they handle are in coordination with the Fargo Police Department.

At 11:00 AM, Mr. Claus, Mr. Zavoral, Mr. Costin, and Mr. Moorhead left the meeting.

Mr. Peterson said he thinks the steps being taken to put the deputy coroner office in the Courthouse are appropriate at this time. He is reluctant to pay for the alternative plan, however, is supportive of making the Coroner's Office in the Sunmart building an alternative plan of consideration. Mr. Berndt said it may be possible to fit up a portion of the space in the Sunmart building and wait with the remainder until a later time.

MOTION, passed

Mr. Berndt moved and Mrs. Scherling seconded to ask the City of Fargo to bid the coroner's space in the Sunmart building as an alternate bid item. Discussion: Mr. Peterson questioned if the county is ready to agree to spending additional money for the alternate plan. On roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting at adjourned at 11:19 AM.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Stoick, Principal Secretary

**CASS COUNTY GOVERNMENT
CORONER EXPENSES
SUMMARY**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
CORONER CONTRACT	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$81,000.00	\$81,000.00	\$55,128.00
TRANSPORTS	\$20,095.85	\$18,609.75	\$13,071.00	\$18,105.00	\$5,985.95
TRAINING	\$5,055.70	\$3,527.04	\$5,305.61	\$597.00	\$280.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$3,207.95	\$4,181.99	\$10,318.69	\$8,172.14	\$8,236.71
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$88,359.50	\$86,318.78	\$109,695.30	\$107,874.14	\$69,630.66
BUDGET	\$ 95,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 126,650.00	\$ 128,000.00
UNDER/(OVER) BUDGET	\$ 6,640.50	\$ 13,681.22	\$ 15,304.70	\$ 18,775.86	\$ 58,369.34

2014

Budget

Salaries	91,147	This budget was put together assuming 1 3/4 positions at the grade established by our outside consultant. The benefits are the standard benefits offered all county employees, The largest benefit is health insurance and for new employees we usually budget for a family plan, for ongoing employees we budget the plan they are on at the time we do budgeting. A lot of the other expenses are what we assumed are things that we need in most offices, their computer equipment is on the rotation cycle, the office equipment is a copier/printer/scanner. As you can see by above, Dr. Baird has been very careful with his budget over the years and has not spent dollars that he didn't need to spend.
Benefits	42,807	
Coroner Contract	24,000	
Transports	20,000	
Maintenance Agreements	350	
Office Telephone	500	
Cell Phones	700	
Education Travel & Per Dien	2,000	
Seminar Registration	500	
Office Supplies	1,000	
Postage	300	
Reference Books	300	
Software	750	
Computer Equipment	2,650	
Office Equipment	3,500	
	<u>190,504</u>	

**CASS COUNTY GOVERNMENT
CORONER EXPENSES/BUDGET
SUMMARY**

YEAR	ACTUAL	BUDGET	(OVER)/UNDER BUDGET
1996	67,663	65,000	(2,663)
1997	66,812	65,000	(1,812)
1998	73,970	65,000	(8,970)
1999	78,124	65,000	(13,124)
2000	71,889	73,000	1,111
2001	81,388	75,000	(6,388)
2002	69,414	75,000	5,586
2003	68,711	80,000	11,289
2004	68,461	85,000	16,539
2005	75,852	85,000	9,148
2006	66,797	85,000	18,203
2007	78,038	85,000	6,962
2008	100,944	95,000	(5,944)
2009	88,360	95,000	6,641
2010	86,319	100,000	13,681
2011	109,695	125,000	15,305
2012	107,874	126,650	18,776
2013	69,631	128,000	58,369

	KRISTIE ROSS PAY		BRANDEE GODFREY	
	2012	2013	2012	2013
ON CALL	\$32,558.00	\$15,341.76	\$24,696.00	\$19,841.62
SECRETARIAL	\$6,000.00	\$4,000.00		
TOTAL PAY	\$38,558.00	\$19,341.76	\$24,696.00	\$19,841.62

YEAR	DATE	NUMBER	VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
2013	1/31/2013	269056	GODFREY, BRANDEE ANN	\$2,621.00	JAN13 SERVICES
2013	2/28/2013	269660	GODFREY, BRANDEE ANN	\$1,799.62	FEB13 SERVICES
2013	3/28/2013	270209	GODFREY, BRANDEE ANN	\$2,984.94	MAR13 SERVICES
2013	5/1/2013	270847	GODFREY, BRANDEE ANN	\$3,893.40	APR13 SERVICES
2013	6/4/2013	271583	GODFREY, BRANDEE ANN	\$2,076.48	MAY13 SERVICES
2013	7/1/2013	272163	GODFREY, BRANDEE ANN	\$2,919.18	JUN13 SERVICES
2013	7/31/2013	272626	GODFREY, BRANDEE ANN	\$1,384.00	JUL13 SERVICES
2013	8/30/2013	273242	GODFREY, BRANDEE ANN	\$2,163.00	AUG13 SERVICES
CALL				\$19,841.62	
2013	1/31/2013	269063	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	JAN13 SERVICES
2013	2/28/2013	269590	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	FEB13 SERVICES
2013	3/28/2013	270145	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	MAR13 SERVICES
2013	4/30/2013	270810	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	APR13 SERVICES
2013	5/31/2013	271487	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	MAY13 SERVICES
2013	6/26/2013	272101	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	JUN13 SERVICES
2013	7/31/2013	272717	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	JUL13 SERVICES
2013	8/30/2013	273311	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	AUG13 SERVICES
ETARI				\$4,000.00	
2013	1/31/2013	269063	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$1,646.00	JAN13 SERVICES
2013	2/28/2013	269662	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$1,834.22	FEB13 SERVICES
2013	3/28/2013	270212	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$1,799.62	MAR13 SERVICES
2013	5/1/2013	270855	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$1,228.58	APR13 SERVICES
2013	6/4/2013	271586	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$2,898.42	MAY13 SERVICES
2013	7/1/2013	272173	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$1,297.80	JUN13 SERVICES
2013	7/31/2013	272717	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$1,955.00	JUL13 SERVICES
2013	8/30/2013	273311	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$2,682.12	AUG13 SERVICES
CALL				\$15,341.76	
2012	1/31/2012	260444	GODFREY, BRANDEE	\$2,016.00	JAN SERVICES
2012	3/1/2012	261071	GODFREY, BRANDEE	\$2,184.00	FEB SERVICES
2012	3/30/2012	261718	GODFREY, BRANDEE	\$2,352.00	MAR SERVICES
2012	5/1/2012	262381	GODFREY, BRANDEE	\$2,268.00	APR SERVICES
2012	6/4/2012	263172	GODFREY, BRANDEE	\$2,520.00	MAY SERVICES
2012	7/2/2012	263934	GODFREY, BRANDEE	\$2,016.00	JUN SERVICES

2012	8/8/2012	264952	GODFREY, BRANDEE	\$2,268.00	JUL SERVICES
2012	8/31/2012	265513	GODFREY, BRANDEE	\$2,016.00	AUG SERVICES
2012	9/28/2012	265996	GODFREY, BRANDEE	\$1,932.00	SEP SERVICES
2012	11/1/2012	266734	GODFREY, BRANDEE	\$1,596.00	OCT12 SERVICES
2012	12/4/2012	267454	GODFREY, BRANDEE	\$1,596.00	NOV12 SERVICES
2012	1/3/2013	268413	GODFREY, BRANDEE	\$1,932.00	DEC12 SERVICES
CALL				\$24,696.00	
2012	1/31/2012	260369	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	JAN SERVICES
2012	2/29/2012	260976	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	FEB SERVICES
2012	3/30/2012	261723	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	MAR SERVICES
2012	4/30/2012	262282	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	APR SERVICES
2012	5/31/2012	263083	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	MAY SERVICES
2012	6/29/2012	263904	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	JUN SERVICES
2012	7/31/2012	264787	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	JUL SERVICES
2012	8/31/2012	265517	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	AUG SERVICES
2012	9/28/2012	266002	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	SEP SERVICES
2012	10/31/2012	266632	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	OCT SERVICES
2012	11/30/2012	267369	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	NOV SERVICES
2012	12/31/2012	268322	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$500.00	DEC SERVICES
ETARI				\$6,000.00	
2012	1/31/2012	260447	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$3,192.00	JAN SERVICES
2012	3/1/2012	261079	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$2,016.00	FEB SERVICES
2012	3/30/2012	261723	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$2,604.00	MAR SERVICES
2012	5/1/2012	262395	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$2,604.00	APR SERVICES
2012	6/4/2012	263176	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$2,520.00	MAY SERVICES
2012	7/2/2012	263942	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$2,604.00	JUN SERVICES
2012	7/31/2012	264787	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$2,940.00	JUL SERVICES
2012	8/31/2012	265517	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$2,940.00	AUG SERVICES
2012	9/28/2012	266002	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$3,108.00	SEP SERVICES
2012	11/1/2012	266739	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$3,444.00	OCT12 SERVICES
2012	12/4/2012	267461	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$2,251.00	NOV12 SERVICES
2012	1/3/2013	268430	ROSS, KRISTIE	\$2,335.00	DEC12 SERVICES
CALL				\$32,558.00	

**CASS COUNTY GOVERNMENT
CORONER EXPENSES
2013**

VENDOR NAME	TRANS. AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
AMAZON.COM Total	\$87.92	LATEX GLOVES
AMER BR OF MED DEATH INVE Total	\$50.00	MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
BAIRD MD, JOHN R. Total	\$15,598.62	SERVICES
BOULGER FUNERAL HOME Total	\$2,000.00	TRANSPORTS
CORONER CELL Total	\$314.29	CELL PHONE CHARGES
DELL MARKETING, LP. Total	\$63.16	SOFTWARE MAINTENANCE
DOOLITTLE'S WOODFI Total	\$61.18	MEETING EXPENSE
ESPEJO, NAPOLEON Total	\$346.00	SERVICES
FARGO POSTMASTER Total	\$2.58	POSTAGE
FEDERAL EXPRESS Total	\$119.38	POSTAGE
GODFREY, BRANDEE ANN Total	\$19,851.60	SERVICES/MILEAGE REIM.
HANSON-RUNSVOLD FUNERAL HOME Total	\$650.00	TRANSPORTS
KORSMO FUNERAL HOME Total	\$910.95	TRANSPORTS
MMRF Total	\$280.00	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
NMS LABS Total	\$530.00	BLOOD TESTS
ROSS, KRISTIE Total	\$19,354.76	SERVICES/MILEAGE REIMB.
SOFTWARE LICENSES Total	\$425.47	SOFTWARE LICENSES
TELESPECTRUM COMMUNICATIONS Total	\$91.00	PAGER SERVICE
THE DODGE COMPANY Total	\$4,465.98	BODY POUCHES
UND FORENSIC PATHOLOGY Total	\$2,000.00	AUTOPSY
US POSTAL SERVICE Total	\$2.77	POSTAGE
WEST FUNERAL HOMES Total	\$2,025.00	TRANSPORTS
WRIGHT FUNERAL HOME Total	\$400.00	TRANSPORTS
Grand Total	\$69,630.66	

**CASS COUNTY GOVERNMENT
CORONER EXPENSES
2012**

VENDOR NAME	TRANS. AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
BAIRD MD, JOHN R. Total	\$17,494.00	SERVICES
BOULGER FUNERAL HOME Total	\$11,700.00	TRANSPORTS
CORONER CELL Total	\$632.44	CELL PHONE SERVICE
ESPEJO, NAPOLEON Total	\$252.00	SERVICES
FEDERAL EXPRESS Total	\$80.03	POSTAGE
F-M AMBULANCE SERVICE Total	\$225.00	TRANSPORTS
GODFREY, BRANDEE Total	\$24,696.00	SERVICES
HORNBACHER'S ADMINISTRATION Total	\$4.92	POSTAGE
HUNTER AMBULANCE SERVICE Total	\$300.00	BODY REMOVAL
J & L SPORTS, INC. Total	\$112.15	SHIRTS
JANUARY PURCHASE CARDS Total	\$66.35	POSTAGE
KORSMO FUNERAL HOME Total	\$930.00	TRANSPORTS
MEDTOX LABORATORIES, INC. Total	\$773.69	TESTING
MICROSOFT LICENSING Total	\$524.80	SOFTWARE LICENSES
MMRF Total	\$0.00	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
NMS LABS Total	\$801.00	ANALYSIS
OFFICE MAX Total	\$27.26	SUPPLIES
OLIVER-NATHAN FUNERAL CHAPEL Total	\$450.00	TRANSPORTS
QUARTERMASTER Total	\$209.94	BADGES
ROSS, KRISTIE Total	\$38,685.31	SERVICES/MILEAGE REIMB
SANDY'S DONUTS & COFFEE SHOP Total	\$155.96	MEETING EXP
SKILLS & TECHNOLOGY TRAINING CENTER Total	\$597.00	TRAINING
TELESPECTRUM COMMUNICATIONS Total	\$123.00	PAGER SERVICE
THE DODGE COMPANY Total	\$353.36	BODY BAGS
UND FORENSIC PATHOLOGY Total	\$4,165.00	AUTOPSY
US POSTAL SERVICE Total	\$14.93	POSTAGE
VERTIN MUNSON FUNERAL HOME Total	\$450.00	TRANSPORTS
WEST FUNERAL HOMES Total	\$4,050.00	TRANSPORTS
Grand Total	\$107,874.14	

**CASS COUNTY GOVERNMENT
CORONER EXPENSES
2011**

VENDOR NAME	TRANS. AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
ABMDI Total	\$350.00	EXAMINATION FEE
AMERICAN AIR Total	\$523.80	TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT
ANDERSON FUNERAL HOME - MN Total	\$450.00	TRANSPORTS
BAIRD MD, JOHN R. Total	\$34,179.00	SERVICES
BOULGER FUNERAL HOME Total	\$5,221.00	TRANSPORTS
CDW GOVERNMENT Total	\$350.30	SCANNER
CORONER CELL Total	\$171.99	CELL PHONE CHARGES
CROWNE PLAZA MN N HOTEL Total	\$215.61	TRAVEL EXPENSES
DEBEBE BIZUNH Total	\$42.30	TRAVEL EXPENSES
ERBERT & GERBERTS Total	\$36.83	MEETING EXPENSES
ESPEJO, NAPOLEON Total	\$168.00	SERVICES
FORENSIC PATHOLOGY Total	\$775.00	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
GODFREY, BRANDEE Total	\$19,722.91	SERVICES/EXP REIMBURSEMENT
GREGORY J NORMAN FUNERAL HOME Total	\$450.00	TRANSPORTS
HANSON-RUNSVOLD FUNERAL HOME Total	\$2,250.00	TRANSPORTS
HECTOR AIRPORT Total	\$27.50	TRAVEL EXPENSES
HP DIRECT-PUBLICSECTOR Total	\$2,685.00	COMPUTER EQUIPMENT
HUNTER AMBULANCE SERVICE Total	\$200.00	BODY REMOVAL
HYATT REGENCY RIVERFRON Total	\$555.68	TRAVEL EXPENSES
KMART Total	\$17.19	SUPPLIES
LITTLE ANGELS SUIDI DOLLS Total	\$137.95	SUPPLIES
MCKESSON MEDICAL SURGICAL Total	\$167.50	SUPPLIES
MEDTOX LABORATORIES, INC. Total	\$225.23	TESTING
MMRF Total	\$520.00	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
ND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES Total	\$60.00	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
ODNEY PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS, INC. Total	\$52.29	JACKETS
PC PARTS AND SUPPLIES Total	\$35.20	PC REPAIR
PIZZA HUT Total	\$20.39	MEETING EXPENSES
RAPID DETECT INC Total	\$185.88	TESTING
RIDE W/STORMY Total	\$21.50	TRAVEL EXPENSES
ROSS, KRISTIE Total	\$29,229.23	SERVICES/EXP REIMBURSEMENT
SFI PHOTOSBYSHUTTERFLY Total	\$44.88	CARDS
SOFTWARE LICENSES Total	\$1,696.82	SOFTWARE LICENSES
TELESPECTRUM COMMUNICATIONS Total	\$90.00	PAGER SERVICES
THE DODGE COMPANY Total	\$4,308.40	BODY BAGS
US POSTAL SERVICE Total	\$7.92	POSTAGE
WEST FUNERAL HOMES Total	\$4,050.00	TRANSPORTS
WRIGHT FUNERAL HOME Total	\$450.00	TRANSPORTS
Grand Total	\$109,695.30	

**CASS COUNTY GOVERNMENT
CORONER EXPENSES
2010**

VENDOR NAME	TRANS. AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
BAIRD MD, JOHN R. Total	\$60,000.00	SERVICES
BAKER FUNERAL HOME Total	\$450.00	TRANSPORTS
BOULGER FUNERAL HOME Total	\$7,700.00	TRANSPORTS
FAITH & HOPE Total	\$550.00	TRANSPORTS
FARGO CASS PUBLIC HEALTH Total	\$334.54	BROCHURES/COPIES/POSTAGE
FASTENAL COMPANY Total	\$139.65	ORGANIC VAPOR ASSEMB
GODFREY, BRANDEE Total	\$1,880.38	EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT
HANSON-RUNSVOLD FUNERAL HOME Total	\$6,075.00	TRANSPORTS
KORSMO FUNERAL HOME Total	\$1,057.00	TRANSPORTS
LERUD JOHNSON & SCHULDT Total	\$302.75	TRANSPORTS
LORENTZEN, MARK Total	\$450.00	TRANSPORTS
MCKESSON MEDICAL SURGICAL Total	\$79.41	SUPPLIES
MEDTOX LABORATORIES, INC. Total	\$80.54	TESTING
MMRF Total	\$520.00	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
ROSS, KRISTIE Total	\$1,161.34	EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT
SORENSEN-ROOT-THOMPSON FUNERAL HOME Total	\$225.00	TRANSPORTS
TELESPECTRUM COMMUNICATIONS Total	\$180.00	PEGER SERVICE
THE DODGE COMPANY Total	\$1,435.00	BODY BAGS
TORGERSON, BARB Total	\$40.00	MEETING EXPENSE
WEST FUNERAL HOMES Total	\$2,168.57	TRANSPORTS/COPIES
WOLFF, DR TERRY L Total	\$1,489.60	CONFERENCE REIMBURSEMENT
Grand Total	\$86,318.78	

**CASS COUNTY GOVERNMENT
CORONER EXPENSES
2009**

VENDOR NAME	TRANS. AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
BAIRD MD, JOHN R. Total	\$60,000.00	SERVICES
BOULGER FUNERAL HOME Total	\$12,220.85	TRANSPORTS
FORENSIC PATHOLOGY Total	\$1,650.00	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
GODFREY, BRANDEE Total	\$240.64	TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT
HANSON-RUNSVOLD FUNERAL HOME Total	\$3,200.00	TRANSPORTS
KASPARI MD, JON Total	\$2,250.00	AUTOPSY
LORENTZEN, MARK Total	\$450.00	TRANSPORTS
MMRF Total	\$520.00	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
PIERCE CO. Total	\$160.00	SUPPLIES
ROSS, KRISTIE Total	\$2,645.06	TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT
TELESPECTRUM COMMUNICATIONS Total	\$488.30	PAGER SERVICE
THE DODGE COMPANY Total	\$309.65	BODY BAGS
WEST FUNERAL HOMES Total	\$3,775.00	TRANSPORTS
WRIGHT FUNERAL HOME Total	\$450.00	TRANSPORTS
Grand Total	\$88,359.50	

Worden, Heather

From: Montplaisir, Michael
Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2013 8:41 AM
To: Worden, Heather
Subject: FW: Scanned image from Auditor's Office
Attachments: copier@casscountynd.gov_20130924_082510.pdf

Heather, can you forward the coroner's committee.

Attached is some information that Sheriff Laney was able to gather from some counties both in North Dakota and South Dakota. Also attached is some information we collected in our office from Stearns county in Minnesota (St. Cloud) and Minnehaha County in South Dakota (Sioux Falls). The counties were selected in North Dakota because they were the largest counties in North Dakota, we didn't contact Grand Forks in North Dakota because Dr. Sens was down and talked to the commission on Monday, the draft minutes from that meeting should be available tomorrow.

Basically, there appears to be a variety of ways to handle the coroner's offices as evidenced that every county we contacted handled it differently. The budget for Minnehaha County according to their web site is \$326,000 VS the \$275,000 in the Sheriff's information - I suspect the difference is the costs the county pays direct for things like transportation that the coroner doesn't see.

Michael Montplaisir, CPA
Cass County Auditor
montplaisirm@casscountynd.gov

From: copier@casscountynd.gov <copier@casscountynd.gov> on behalf of copier@ <casscountynd.gov
copier@casscountynd.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2013 8:25 AM
To: Montplaisir, Michael
Subject: Scanned image from Auditor's Office

DEVICE NAME: AUD-M620N
DEVICE MODEL: MX-M620N
LOCATION: Not Set

FILE FORMAT: PDF MMR(G4)
RESOLUTION: 300dpi x 300dpi

Attached file is scanned image in PDF format.

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Minnehaha County

1. Forensic Pathologist/Dr. Kenneth Snell (Also Eastern SD Medical Examiner)
2. Based out of hospital, but is a listed county office
3. Hired by and budget set by county
 - a. Transportation by City/County Ambulance Service--\$150.00 in town/\$300.00 external
 - b. Toxicology/labs/etc.
 - c. Salary...cost for autopsy/salary for investigators/ etc.
4. Paid by number of hours on call/week at a time.
5. He hires his assistants to go to scenes
 - a. Qualifications--Master's Degree
 - b. Pathology Assistants
 - c. St. Louis Certification
6. Workers Comp thru hospital
7. Hospital Space provides their office space.
8. Coroner Numbers by line item:
 - a. 2012—502 in Minnehaha
 - i. 78 autopsies/externals
 - ii. 119—non-view
 - iii. 190—consults
 - iv. 35 ---dc kickback
9. 2013—Budget Numbers (3 line items)
 - a. 36,000 Toxicology and Labs
 - b. 22,000 Transportation
 - c. 267,400 Salaries for all employees and autopsy (\$2,000 per x 78 last year)
 - i. Salaries- \$111,400.00
 - ii. Autopsies- \$156,000.00

*2014 Requested Budget is -- \$275,000

10. Bodies are stored at the hospital as he is also the ME



Minnehaha County

South Dakota

 Search

[Commission](#) [Departments](#) [Notices](#) [Information](#) [Services](#)

Highway 139 (Tea/Ellis Rd) Closure for Bridge Replacement
[Click here for more details.](#)

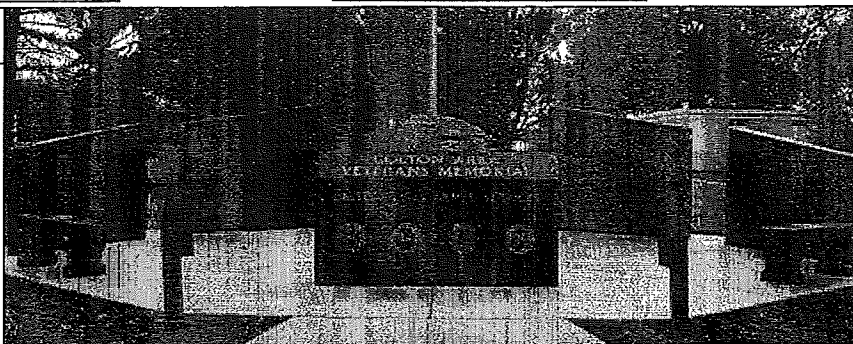
ACTIVE SHOOTER - What Can You Do
[Click here for more details.](#)

Bridge Weight Limits
[Click here for more details.](#)

SDDOT Truck Weights
[Click here for more details.](#)

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- [Property Information System](#)
- [Most Wanted List](#)
- [Gotwarrants.org](#)



Minnehaha County, created in 1862, is a political subdivision of the State of South Dakota encompassing 810 square miles. Minnehaha County is the largest county in the state in terms of population. The 2010 Census recorded a population of 169,468. The 2012 estimated population is 171,889. Minnehaha County is governed by ten elected officials - 5 part-time Commissioners, an Auditor, a Treasurer, a State's Attorney, Register of Deeds and Sheriff. Daily operations are managed by 19 full-time Department Heads.

The County, employing 524 full-time employees, provides such services as: law enforcement, jail administration, highway construction/maintenance, property valuation, planning/zoning, emergency management, poor relief, juvenile detention services, election administration, official recording of deeds and documents, vehicle tax and licensing and property tax collection and administration.

The County also maintains two rural parks. In conjunction with the City of Sioux Falls, the County maintains the Siouxland Library system, the Siouxland Heritage Museum system and dispatches police, fire and medical personnel through the Metro Communications 911 Center.

Important Links

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Criminal Justice Advisory Comm. | Envision 2035 | 2013 Construction Map |
| Sample Ballot | Voter Registration | Absentee Voting |
| Press Releases | GotWarrants.org | Homeless Advisory Board |
| Commission Agendas & Minutes | Siouxland Libraries | Minnehaha County Courts |
| App for County Board Vacancies | Planning Commission | Minnehaha County Fire Chiefs |
| Americans with Disabilities Act | County Ordinances | Siouxland Heritage Museums |
| Government and Local Links | DMV Forms | Travel Conditions |
| 2012 Ag Land Assessment Info | Register of Deeds Forms | 2013 Assessed Values |
| Holidays Office Is Closed | GIS Mapping | FEMA Maps |
| Nixle Community Info System | Metro Communications | Lobbying Information |

Minnehaha County Campus Map



Video Tour of Minnehaha County

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Welcome | Tourism and Things To Do | Community Services |
| Quality of Life | Healthcare | Business and Industry |



ANNUAL BUDGET FOR MINNEHAHA COUNTY, SD
for the Year January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013

	General	Highway	Emerg Mgmt	Fire	Library	Domestic Abuse	Building	Museum Store	Museum Enterprise	M & P	24-7 Sobriety	Bond Redemption	E-911
Cash Balance Applied	2,128,473	652,923	50,495	15,237	41,483	(500)	(14,109)	3,628	44,373	(4,100)	(11,999)	38,940	-
Total Taxes Levied	32,696,128			467,261	958,002		3,759,983					1,162,390	
310 Back Taxes & Interest	575,000			6,475	11,965		68,100					19,750	
316 Wheel Tax		3,100,000											
317 911 Telephone Surcharge													2,400,000
320 Licenses and Permits	205,400					50,000							
330 Intergovernmental Revenue	3,930,033	6,450,000	131,749	200	300		104,200	30,000		94,000	350,000	53,518	
340 Charges for Goods & Services	8,024,901	2,000				20,000							
350 Fines & Forfeits	298,900					500							
360 Miscellaneous Revenue	523,925	8,000		1,200	1,500		6,500	400	155,400	100		2,000	
370 Other Financing Sources			149,143										
SUB-TOTAL	48,382,760	10,212,923	331,387	490,373	1,013,250	70,000	3,924,674	34,028	199,773	90,000	338,001	1,276,598	2,400,000
Less 5% (SDCL 7-21-18)	(2,303,941)			(23,351)	(48,250)		(186,889)					(60,790)	
NET MEANS OF FINANCE	46,078,819	10,212,923	331,387	467,022		70,000	3,737,785	34,028	199,773	90,000	338,001	1,215,808	2,400,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS	46,078,819	10,212,923	331,387	467,022	965,000	70,000	3,737,785	34,028	199,773	90,000	338,001	1,215,808	2,400,000
Taxes Levied	39,043,764												
Cash Applied	2,944,845												
Revenues	26,626,016												
Uncollectables	(2,623,222)												
TOTAL BUDGET	65,991,403												

ANNUAL BUDGET FOR MINNEHAHA COUNTY, SD
 For the year January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013

COUNTY TAX LEVIES IN:	Dollars	\$'s / 1,000
WITHIN LIMITED LEVY:		
General County Purpose (10-12-9)	32,696,128	3.080
Library	958,002	0.360
LIMITED LEVY (10-12-21)		
SUB-TOTAL	33,654,130	3.440
OUTSIDE LIMITED LEVY:		
Building Fund (7-25-1)	3,759,983	0.354
UNLIMITED LEVY - SUB TOTAL	3,759,983	0.354
LIMITED AND UNLIMITED LEVY - SUB TOTAL	37,414,113	3.794
OTHER SPECIAL LEVIES:		
Fire Protection (34-31-3)	467,261	0.165
Bond Redemption	1,162,390	0.110
TOTAL TAXES LEVIED BY COUNTY	39,043,764	4.089

As of _____ these levies are (are not)
 approved by the Department of Revenue

RESOLUTION MC12-	
ADOPTION OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR MINNEHAHA COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA	
Whereas, (7-21-5-thru 13), SDCL provides that the Board of County Commissioners shall each year prepare a Provisional Budget of all contemplated expenditures and revenues of the County and all its institutions and agencies for such fiscal year and, Whereas, the Board of County Commissioners did prepare a Provisional Budget and cause same to be published by law, and Whereas, due and legal notice has been given to the meeting of the Board of County Commissioners for the consideration of such Provisional Budget and all changes, eliminations and additions have been made thereto.	
Now therefore be it resolved, That such provisional budget as amended and all its purposes, schedules, appropriations, amounts, estimates and all matters therein set forth, shall be approved and adopted as the Annual Budget of the appropriation and expenditures for Minnehaha County, South Dakota and all its institutions and agencies for calendar year beginning January 1, 2013 and ending December 31, 2013 and the same is hereby approved and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Minnehaha County, South Dakota, this 25th day of September, 2012. The Annual Budget so adopted is available for public inspection during normal business hours at the office of the County Auditor Minnehaha County, South Dakota. The accompanying taxes are levied by Minnehaha County for the year January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013.	
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MINNEHAHA COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA	
_____	CHAIRMAN
_____	COMMISSIONER
_____	COMMISSIONER
_____	COMMISSIONER
_____	COMMISSIONER
ATTEST _____	COUNTY AUDITOR

**ANNUAL BUDGET FOR MINNEHAHA COUNTY, SD
for the Year January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013**

	General	Highway	Emerg Mgmt	Fire	Library	Domestic Abuse	Building	Museum Store	Museum Enterprise	M & P	24-7 Sobriety	Bond Redemption	E-911
100 General Government													
110 Legislative													
111 County Commissioners	589,203												
112 Contingency	25,000												
120 Elections	86,594												
130 Judicial System	1,026,208												
140 Financial Administration													
141 Auditor	645,609												
142 Treasurer	1,235,988												
143 Information Services	1,889,595												
150 Legal Services													
151 State's Attorney	3,162,570												
152 Public Defender	2,375,335												
153 Public Advocate	618,797												
160 Other													
161 General Government Bldg	2,320,643												
162 Director of Equalization	1,270,643												
163 Register of Deeds	721,143									90,000			
166 Predatory Animal (GFP)	5,855												
169 Human Resources	317,256												
170 SECOG	23,246												
172 County Insurance	218,500												
Total General Govt	16,532,185	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	90,000	-	-	-
200 Public Safety													
210 Law Enforcement													
211 Air Guard	861,327												
211 Sheriff	6,161,348												
212 Sheriff / Corrections	10,705,988												
213 Coroner	326,000												
215 Juvenile Detention Center	3,205,000												
218 STI Security	159,289												
219 24/7 Sobriety											338,001		
220 Protective & Emerg Svcs													
221 Fire Protection	47,000			467,022									
222 Humane Society	281,995												
225 Metro Communications													2,400,000
226 Emergency Management													
Total Public Safety	21,747,947	-	331,387	467,022	-	-	-	-	-	-	338,001	-	2,400,000
300 Public Works													
310 Highways & Bridges													
311 Highway Administration		1,346,536											
311 Highway Construction		8,866,387											
Total Public Works	-	10,212,923	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**ANNUAL BUDGET FOR MINNEHAHA COUNTY, SD
for the Year January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013**

	General	Highway	Emerg Mgmt	Fire	Library	Domestic Abuse	Building	Museum Store	Museum Enterprise	M & P	24-7 Sobriety	Bond Redemption	E-911
800 Capital Outlay													
810 Bond Payment	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,737,785	-	-	-	-	1,215,808	-
Total Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,737,785	-	-	-	-	1,215,808	-
900 Other Uses													
911 Operating Transfers Out	149,143												
219 General	149,143												
226 Emergency Management													
Total Other Uses	298,286												
Total Expenditure Appropriation	46,078,819	10,212,923	331,387	467,022	965,000	70,000	3,737,785	34,028	199,773	90,000	338,001	1,215,808	2,400,000

State & County QuickFacts

Stearns County, Minnesota

People QuickFacts	Stearns	
	County	Minnesota
Population, 2012 estimate	151,606	5,379,139
Population, 2010 (April 1) estimates base	150,642	5,303,925
Population, percent change, April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2012	0.6%	1.4%
Population, 2010	150,642	5,303,925
Persons under 5 years, percent, 2012	6.2%	6.5%
Persons under 18 years, percent, 2012	22.7%	23.7%
Persons 65 years and over, percent, 2012	12.7%	13.6%
Female persons, percent, 2012	49.6%	50.3%
White alone, percent, 2012 (a)	92.6%	86.5%
Black or African American alone, percent, 2012 (a)	3.4%	5.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, 2012 (a)	0.4%	1.3%
Asian alone, percent, 2012 (a)	2.1%	4.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, 2012 (a)	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races, percent, 2012	1.5%	2.2%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2012 (b)	2.9%	4.9%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2012	90.1%	82.4%
Living in same house 1 year & over, percent, 2007-2011	81.1%	85.6%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2007-2011	4.1%	7.1%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent age 5+, 2007-2011	7.1%	10.5%
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2007-2011	90.4%	91.6%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2007-2011	23.9%	31.8%
Veterans, 2007-2011	11,207	385,675
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2007-2011	20.7	22.6
Housing units, 2011	62,519	2,354,034
Homeownership rate, 2007-2011	72.6%	73.6%
Housing units in multi-unit structures, percent, 2007-2011	22.2%	21.6%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2007-2011	\$172,600	\$201,400
Households, 2007-2011	56,469	2,094,265
Persons per household, 2007-2011	2.49	2.46
Per capita money income in the past 12 months (2011 dollars), 2007-2011	\$25,329	\$30,310
Median household income, 2007-2011	\$53,035	\$58,476
Persons below poverty level, percent, 2007-2011	12.8%	11.0%

Business QuickFacts	Stearns	
	County	Minnesota
Private nonfarm establishments, 2011	4,267	144,606 ¹
Private nonfarm employment, 2011	75,490	2,393,746 ¹
Private nonfarm employment, percent change, 2010-2011	0.1%	1.5% ¹
Nonemployer establishments, 2011	10,030	387,440
Total number of firms, 2007	13,481	496,657
Black-owned firms, percent, 2007	S	2.5%
American Indian- and Alaska Native-owned firms, percent, 2007	S	0.6%
Asian-owned firms, percent, 2007	1.0%	2.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander-owned firms, percent, 2007	F	S
Hispanic-owned firms, percent, 2007	F	1.0%
Women-owned firms, percent, 2007	21.6%	26.8%

Contract @ Ramsey County at \$200,000 per year for those services.

CORONOR INFORMATION

Burleigh County

1. Dr. Boyd Addy-Paid Contract—Appointed County Official for both counties
 2. Direct daily fee.....\$150 per day for Burleigh Co/\$75.00 per day for Morton Co
 3. No death investigators
 4. Unsure about WC/ pay training. He does receive a stipend from BCSO to go to Hennepin County for continuing training
 5. Works out of his office
 6. Number of unattended deaths--8-9 per month for County
 7. They investigate every unattended death
 8. Contract w/metro ambulance.....pay fee \$245.00 transport to state coroner's office
 9. Sheriff's Office pays the transport fee
 10. Agency handles criminal evidence.....bodies go straight to state ME since he is based in Bismarck.
-

Ward County

1. Dr. Steven Stripe
 2. Appointed County Official paid.....(\$2500.00 per month/\$30,000 per year)
 3. Budget set by Ward County—(\$68,000 per year total budget)
 4. Hires assistant out of his budget
 5. County North Building...they have a morgue cooler within their area (holds 3)
 6. Not sure about W/C
 7. Checking on total unattended death numbers
 8. Yes, they investigate every unattended death
 9. Contract w/different funeral homes/if suspicious, use county vehicle (suburban) or ride w/ambulance to ME
 10. Cost of transport is charged to the County Coroner and it's drawn from Coroner budget.
 11. Evidence at SO, body at County Morgue until sent to funeral home.
-

Death Systems

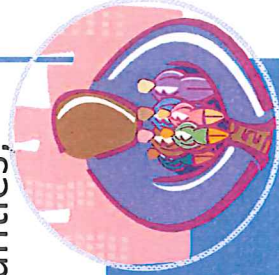
(ND went from County to Mixed System in 1993)

- Pro
 - Centralization with specialization of services (more docs, staff, equipment, facilities)
 - May be most economical (small-medium size, central office)
 - Standards and expectations
 - Ease of capital, bonds, etc.
 - Ready access for small counties; no county expense
- Con
 - Geography and Border issues
 - Reduced county /local accountability
 - Transportation and access



State based

- Pro
 - Most responsive to local constituents (families, law enforcement, hospitals, trauma, county commissions)
 - Most economical for larger counties (> 1M; ? >500,000)
 - Flexible with alternate models
 - Follows medical referral lines
- Con
 - Fragmentation possible
 - Assurance of quality
 - Economics of small counties; county budgets

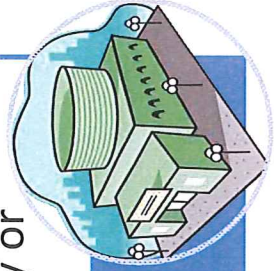


County based

Death Systems: State vs. County

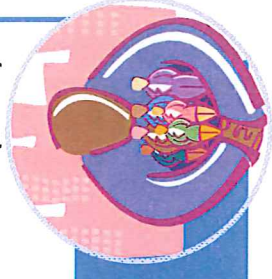
(ND went from County to Mixed System in 1993)

- State assumes ALL responsibility
 - Facility
 - Transportation
 - All personnel
 - Single office; usually FP run; ideal for small states (RI, CT, DE)
 - All operations from one site
 - May have regional personnel (i.e. NM, MD) but report / employed to state office
 - Multiple offices
 - Central oversight (?), regional offices (VA, NC, GA_(working)); (none regarded as ideal model nationally)
 - May have some county or contract responsibility



State based

- County pays; large autonomy
- All responsibilities within County; often not physician or FP run
- State laws usually only define Coroner or County official (JP, County Attorney, Sheriff-Coroner, others)
- Some with State Board to review operations and appoint CME (FL)
- Some elected, some appointed, some have mandatory qualifications, some do not
- Often large discrepancy in services, investigations
- Some with strict state standards (MN) for county functions



County based

National Standards: Grand Forks

		Grand Forks		
Parameter	National (per 1000 population)	Needs for Current Service	Actual	Targeted service
Population		130,000 (Counties with primary jurisdiction only)		525,000
Area		8,200		241,000
Facility Space	19.5 sq. ft.	2,500	7,400 + ~2,500 UND	10000
Autopsy Space	2.4 sq. ft.	400 (800 min)	2400	1500
Body Storage	0.042 places	5	14 (20)	22
# Autopsies	1	130	200*	525
	Per 1000 autopsies			
Forensic Pathologists	6	1	3 (UND duties)	3 (5-6) (UND duties)
Investigators	7	.7	1 (+6 PT)	3
Assistants	7	.7	(5 PT)	3
Histotech	1	.1	1 (UND)	0.5
Support Staff	11	1	2 UND, contracts	6
Total	38	6	~6-7 FTE	~12 FTE

National Standards

		Bismarck		
Parameter	National (per 1000 population)	Needs for Statewide Service	Bismarck Actual	Regional Goal
Population		680,000		350,000
Area		290,000		146,000
Facility Space	19.5 sq. ft.	13,500	5,000	7,000
Autopsy Space	2.4 sq. ft.	1600	~ 1,000	900
Body Storage	0.042 places	29	8	15
# Autopsies	1	680	410 (excludes GF)	350
	Per 1000 autopsies			
Forensic Pathologists	6	4	1	2
Investigators	7	5	2	2.5
Assistants	7	5	3 PT	2.5
Histotech	1	.6	Contract	.5
Support Staff	11	7.5	0.5; Most contracted	5
Total	38	21	~ 5 FTE	10.5

National Standards

Parameter	Grand Forks				Bismarck		
	National (per 1000 population)	Current	Actual	Targeted service	Statewide	Bismarck Actual	Regional Goal
Population		130,000		525,000	680,000		350,000
Area		8,200		241,000	290,000		146,000
Facility Space	19.5 sq. ft.	2,500	7,400 + ~2,500 UND	10000	13,500	5,000	7,000
Autopsy Space	2.4 sq. ft.	400 (800 min)	2400	1500	1600	~1,000	900
Body Storage	0.042 places	5	14 (20)	22	29	8	15
# Autopsies	1	130	200*	525	680	410	350
	Per 1000 autopsies						
Forensic Pathologists	6	1	3 (UND duties)	3 (5-6) (UND duties)	4	1	2
Investigators	7	.7	1 (+6 PT)	3	5	2	2.5
Assistants	7	.7	(5 PT)	3	5	3 PT	2.5
Histotech	1	.1	1	0.5	.6	Contract	.5
Support Staff	11	1	2 UND, contracts	6	7.5	0.5; Most contracted	5
Total	38	6	~7-8 FTE	~12 FTE	21	~ 5 FTE	10.5

National Standards

Parameter	National (per 1000 population)	
Population	1,000,000	
Area	compact	Minimal transportation and court travel
Facility Space	19.5 sq. ft.	19,500 sq. ft.
Autopsy Space	2.4 sq. ft.	2,400 sq. ft.
Body Storage	0.042 places	42
# Autopsies	1	1000
	Per 1000 autopsies	
Forensic Pathologists	6	6
Investigators	7	7
Assistants	7	7
Histotech	1	1
Support Staff	11	11
Total	38	38
		Annual Operating: 3.8 – 4.2 M

Factors: Release times; Culture, Unidentified; Unclaimed ; Social services; Family economics

Pretty constant; rare exceptions

Includes one CME with administrative and oversight

ND Law

- Cases:
 - Obvious or suspected homicidal, suicidal or accidental injury
 - Firearm injury
 - Severe, unexplained injury
 - Occupant or pedestrian motor vehicle injury
 - Injury to a minor
 - Fire, chemical, electrical or radiation
 - Starvation
 - Unidentified or skeletonized human remains
 - Drowning
 - Suffocation, smothering or strangulation
 - Poisoning or illegal drug use
 - Prior child abuse or neglect assessment concerns
 - Open child protection service case on the victim
 - Victim is in the custody of department of human services, county social services, department of corrections and rehabilitation or other correctional facility or law enforcement
 - Unexplained death or death in an undetermined manner
 - Suspected sexual assault
 - or
 - Any other suspicious factor
- All deaths in which there is doubt as to whether it constitutes a medical examiner's case shall be reported and discussed with the Medical Examiner's Office

NAME: Deaths requiring Investigation

- Deaths due to violence
- Known or suspected non-natural deaths
- Unexplained or unexpected deaths when in apparent good health
- Unexpected or unexplained deaths of infants and children
- Deaths occurring under unusual or suspicious circumstances
- Deaths of persons in custody
- Deaths known or suspected to be caused by diseases constituting a threat to public health
- Deaths of persons not under care of a physician

General categories for UND

- All homicides, suicides
- All fire fatalities (no exceptions for deaths at fires or ER)
- All unexplained/unexpected child / infant deaths
- All drivers, most passengers unless hospitalization prolonged
- All in-custody, pursuit deaths or deaths with pending court actions, particularly if ID is issue or threats/violence
- Work-involved deaths (always) or deaths at work (usually)
- Most accidental deaths
- Suspected drug / alcohol related deaths (rare exceptions)
- Public health hazards, including communicable infectious diseases
- Age in cases of sudden, unexpected death
 - Under 50: Favor autopsy unless strong history and objections
 - Over 65: Generally no
- Judgment of seasoned ABDMI, law enforcement
- Is it faster, easier to do the case or try to answer questions without doing the case?

NAME Autopsy performance

- Death known or suspected to have been caused by apparent criminal violence
- Death is unexpected and unexplained in an infant or child
- Death is associated with police action
- Death is apparently non-natural and in custody of local, state or federal institution
- Death is due to acute workplace injury
- Death is caused by apparent electrocution
- Death is by apparent intoxication by alcohol, drugs or poison
- Death is caused by unwitnessed or suspected drowning
- Body is unidentified and autopsy may aid in identification
- Body is skeletonized
- Body is charred
- Forensic pathologist deems a forensic autopsy is necessary to determine cause or manner of death or to collect evidence
- Deceased is the driver or passenger in a motor vehicle who is dead at the scene or who dies in a hospital before injuries can be determined and documented.



SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP FOR
MEDICOLEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATION

**Regional Medicolegal Autopsy and Death Investigation Centers
-Construction, Staffing, and Costs-**

A Report and Recommendations

**Prepared by the System Infrastructure Committee of the
Scientific Working Group on Medicolegal Death Investigation (SWGMDI)**

Executive Summary

Given the shortage of forensic pathologists and adequately equipped and staffed forensic autopsy facilities in the United States, a regional system of medicolegal autopsy and death investigation facilities might be an effective and efficient way of serving the needs for quality services in underserved areas of the United States. To this end, the National Research Council's (NRC) Report, "*Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*" recommended that funds be provided to build regional offices in areas of need. This report presents information that would be helpful in establishing and maintaining regional facilities: formulas for predicting facility size, construction costs, personnel needs, and ongoing costs based on a population-based model; minimum population catchment areas; and maximum feasible distances for transporting deceased bodies to regional facilities. The recommendations may be useful to jurisdictions that are considering the construction of regional medicolegal death investigation/autopsy centers in the United States. In short, this report focuses on details about construction, staffing, and ongoing operational costs, *not* on where such facilities should be located. The locations where regional centers are needed will be the subject of other Scientific Working Group on Medicolegal Death Investigation (SWGMDI) studies and reports.

Regional Medicolegal Autopsy and Death Investigation Centers -Construction, Staffing, and Costs-

A Report and Recommendations
Prepared by the System Infrastructure Committee of the
Scientific Working Group on Medicolegal Death Investigation (SWGMDI)

INTRODUCTION

Recommendation 11a of the National Research Council (NRC) Report, *“Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward”* is that funds be provided to build regional medical examiner offices (1). As a follow up to that recommendation, the Scientific Working Group on Medicolegal Death Investigation (SWGMDI) identified the perceived need for regional centers in the United States and indicated in that report that much more study is needed to determine where such centers should be located (2). Subsequently, the SWGMDI Board directed its System Infrastructure Committee to identify infrastructure needs for establishing regional facilities, including personnel and support service needs. The Committee was also charged with developing a per capita formula for personnel needs in any medicolegal death investigation system. Although the locations where regional centers are truly needed will be the subject of another SWGMDI report, this report presents formulas for predicting facility size, construction costs, and personnel needs and costs based on a population-based model. A recommended minimum population catchment is also provided, as is a minimum per capita annual cost to operate the constructed facility.

METHODS

The SWGMDI System Infrastructure Committee reviewed available recommendations, inspection and accreditation reports and data, and surveys concerning staffing and infrastructure for medicolegal death investigation systems, including the following:

- Historical staffing pattern recommendations previously published by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) (3).
- NAME Inspection and Accreditation system data from 2012 regarding office-specific population based catchment areas, facility square footage, autopsy room square footage, autopsy rate per 1,000 population, and annual budget per capita.
- Data previously collected by NAME in 2001 similar in scope to the NAME Inspection and Accreditation data of 2012.
- A survey specifically conducted for this report of medical examiner/coroner offices that have been constructed within the past 15 years, including square footage construction costs and the cost of equipment contained in the physical plant that was included in initial construction costs.
- Accreditation processes and standards of the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners and Inspection and Accreditation Checklist of the National Association of Medical Examiners (4, 5).

The Committee also considered input from SWGMDI Board Members who work in medical examiner/coroner offices to obtain their experience and perspective on staffing and infrastructure needs to effectively run a medicolegal autopsy facility.

Because a recent SWGMDI survey found that most responders did not perceive a need for other crime lab services to be included in regional autopsy centers (2), this report focuses on regional medicolegal autopsy centers that would support autopsy performance, investigative and support staff, and histology services.

FINDINGS

Population catchment area

Review of NAME Inspection and Accreditation data and previously collected facility data shows that Medical Examiner/Coroner (ME/C) offices operating at an acceptable level of autopsy performance annually perform approximately one autopsy per 1,000 persons. NAME inspection data show an average autopsy rate for all offices of all types of 0.5 per 1,000, and facility surveys found 0.7 per 1,000 persons. An autopsy rate of 1 per 1,000 population might be considered as a best case scenario formula for ensuring that medicolegal autopsies are performed in numbers that meet public health, public safety, justice system, medical quality assurance, and other needs. Thus, the SWGMDI regards an estimated autopsy rate of 1 per 1,000 population as one that can provide optimal benefit for all users and a target around which to plan. The NAME Accreditation criteria require that no forensic pathologist be required to perform more than 250 autopsies per year (5). Combining these data and criteria suggests that one forensic pathologist should be available for every 250,000 persons in a given jurisdiction. To provide adequate backup and coverage for off days for the office's jurisdiction and consultation, as needed, with a professional colleague, the Infrastructure Committee finds that each regional medicolegal autopsy facility should have a minimum of two forensic pathologists. Thus, to ensure efficient use of forensic pathologists, the Committee recommends a *minimum population catchment area of 500,000 population*, recognizing that smaller population catchment areas may be needed in some places when all factors such as death rate, travel distances, travel times, and other factors are considered.

Geographic catchment area

Because body transport from the location of death to a jurisdiction's autopsy facility imposes costs on both the death investigation system and on families who may be charged for transport by funeral service providers, minimizing the distances that bodies must be transported helps to reduce costs. A recent survey of state medical examiner offices found that the maximum distance for transporting bodies ranged from 50 to 1,200 miles with an average (excluding the 1,200 outlier) of 211 miles (6). A very recent on-line survey of medical examiners and coroners conducted specifically for this report showed that body transport costs averaged \$170 per case when a flat rate was paid, and \$128 plus \$1.47 per mile when a basic rate plus per mile fee was utilized (7). In many jurisdictions, one-way transport of a body may require up to 3 to 4 hours. Thus, costs for mileage and personnel time can be significant, and delays in the timeliness of autopsies resulting from lengthy transportation times can have an adverse impact on autopsy interpretations. Further, if medicolegal death investigators were to work in a regional center and need to travel to death scenes to conduct their investigations, travel distances would need to be

reasonable so that scene investigations were not discouraged. To address these considerations, the Infrastructure Committee recommends that transport distances exceed 100 miles in no more than 10% of cases. For example, in catchment areas containing a central, more densely populated area, it may be acceptable to have a larger catchment area maximum transport distance if the number of cases from outlying areas is relatively small and infrequent.

Staffing

The NAME’s original Inspection and Accreditation Standards recommended that staffing be based on the number of autopsies performed annually, which in turn is based on population (3). For an office performing 1,000 autopsies per year, which would typically cover a population base of about 1 million persons, NAME recommended the following staffing:

Chief Medical Examiner	1
Staff forensic pathologist	5
Autopsy assistant	7
(Includes 2 photographers)	
Histologist	1
Chief Investigator	1
Investigator	8
Reception/Administrative/Clerical	9
Security and Attendant.....	6
Custodial	2
 Total	 40

One of the authors of this report (RH) works in the Fulton County (GA) Medical Examiner’s (FCME) office that serves a population base of approximately 1 million, and the office’s staffing pattern is almost identical to the recommendation above with slightly fewer employees (n=36). There are no significant shortages in personnel, caseloads meet NAME Inspection and Accreditation requirements, and the office complies with the NAME’s Forensic Autopsy Performance Standards and the National Institute of Justice’s Guidelines for the Death Scene Investigator (5, 8). The investigators work from the office, staff it 24/7/365, and respond to death scenes as needed. Autopsies are conducted 7 days a week, and there is always at least one security person or morgue attendant on the premises. One histologist can adequately manage the case load using a policy that tissues are processed to blocks in all autopsy cases and to glass slides when microscopy is needed. Staffing patterns in other accredited medical examiner and coroner offices are similar. Thus, the Infrastructure Committee recommends a *staffing pattern for regional offices similar to that in the older NAME accreditation standards, with approximately 35-40 employees per million persons*. Additional staff would be required if other lab services were provided by a regional office, such as toxicological analyses, fingerprinting, DNA profiling, trace evidence examination, drug identification, digital evidence analysis, arson evidence analysis, and firearms and ballistics investigations.

Some of the positions listed above would probably increase linearly as the population served increases (along with autopsies) such as forensic pathologist positions, while others might not

(such as Chief ME or Chief Investigator). Such facts should be kept in mind when staffing levels are planned.

Funding

NAME surveys conducted in 2001 found the following annual per capita funding levels for county and state medical examiner systems (9, 10):

Type of System	Average annual funding per capita	Range of annual funding per capita
County medical examiner systems	\$2.16	\$0.62 to \$5.54
State medical examiner systems	\$1.41	\$0.34 to \$3.20

The survey, however, included medical examiner offices that were well funded and others that had marginal or insufficient funding. Furthermore, some of the surveyed offices provided only basic death investigation services, while others had laboratories and provided a greater scope of services. In 2012, the average annual funding level was \$3.79 per capita for 31 NAME-accredited offices that reported adequate or more than adequate facilities and staffing. Nineteen of these offices were county-based, and the remainder were regional or state offices.

Returning to the FCME office example, its 2012 budget was \$3,784,793 or \$3.78 per capita, which is well within the range shown above and almost identical to the average funding level reported in 2012. Fulton County’s personnel costs including salaries, benefits, insurance, and pensions accounted for 80% of the office’s total annual budget, a situation not unusual among government funded ME/C offices. Thus, a funding level of \$3.78 per capita enables this office to provide basic death investigation and pathology services, histology services, body transport services, and other operational services that meet NAME Accreditation and other professional guidelines and standards.

Based on the above analysis, the Infrastructure Committee recommends minimum annual funding of \$3.75 per capita for the operation of regional medicolegal autopsy and death investigation centers that would include investigative, autopsy, histological, body transport, and basic radiographic services. The per capita funding level would need to be adjusted upward if more comprehensive services were included.

Facilities

Facility and Autopsy Room Square footage

In 2001, data from 140 ME Offices, which covered 151,500,890 of the US population, showed that the average total facility and autopsy room square footage per thousand population were 12.7 (range: 0.2 to 140; median: 10) and 2.7 (range: 0.1 to 18.4; median: 2.1), respectively. These older data suggest that a regional facility serving a population of 500,000 should have a total area of about 6,350 square feet and about 1,350 square feet of autopsy room area.

In 2012, the average area for the total facility and autopsy areas were 19.5 square feet and 2.7 square feet per 1,000 population, respectively, for 31 NAME-accredited offices that reported adequate or more than adequate facility space. Thus, current data on average show greater total facility sizes but identical amounts of autopsy room space. These newer averages suggest that a

regional facility serving a population of 500,000 should have a total area of about 9,750 square feet and about 1,350 square feet of autopsy room area. It would be wise to build in additional space that might eventually accommodate installation of newer imaging equipment such as CT and MRI scanners. Plans should include enough space to accommodate future need, realizing that many public office spaces are built to last for a 25 to 30 year period.

Facilities should also be of adequate size to ensure that space exists to perform needed functions and that accreditation capability is not put at risk because of inadequate facility size.

Autopsy Tables and Body Storage

Review of 2001 data from 154 ME offices, which covered 161,408,392 of the US Population, showed that the average number of autopsy stations and bodies that could be stored was 5 (range: 0.5 to 60; median: 4) and 42 (range: 1 to 250; median: 28) per million population, respectively. These averages suggest that a regional facility serving a population of 500,000 should have 2-3 autopsy stations and storage space for approximately 20 bodies.

Construction Costs

An online survey of NAME members provided the following construction costs per square foot for 10 medical examiner facilities built since 1997: median: \$371; mean: \$345; range: \$110 - \$474.¹ The three facilities with the highest costs per square foot include more equipment and services, such as additional forensic laboratories and CT-scanners with specialized rooms for the scanners, than the basic medicolegal death investigation facility. The average construction cost for the seven more basic facilities was \$340 per square foot. Construction costs will vary regionally depending on the local economy and other factors such as building codes that have to do with appearances of buildings and special considerations related to the environment, such as earthquake and high wind risks. Further, the cost of land may need to be considered as a separate budget item over and above basic construction costs for the physical facility and its contents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the above considerations and other information, a summary of recommendations has been developed for regional medicolegal autopsy centers that could be designed to house basic medicolegal death investigation and autopsy services including histology.

- 1) The minimum population catchment areas should be targeted at 500,000 unless the geography or square mileage of the area makes a 500,000 population catchment area impractical, in which case smaller population catchment areas should be considered.
- 2) Centers should be located in areas, when feasible, so that body transport distances do not exceed 100 miles in more than 10% of cases.
- 3) For a center serving 500,000 population: Minimum square footage of the facility should be 9,750 square feet with a minimum autopsy room area of 1,350 square feet and having at least 3 autopsy tables and body storage capacity of at least 20.

¹ The centers that provided information on construction costs and the year in which they were constructed are Fulton County, GA (1999); Cuyahoga County, OH (1999); Collier County, FL (1998); Macomb County, MI (2008); Anoka County, MN (2008); Orlando, FL (2009); Albuquerque, NM (2010); Baltimore, MD (2010); University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND (2011); and West Tennessee, Memphis, TN (2012).

- 4) Ideally, all newly constructed facilities should have at least two buildings, when feasible, with separate HVAC and air handling equipment, one building for office space and the other for performance of autopsies, body storage, and histology services. One building can suffice if air handling and other design features ensure mitigation of possible biosafety hazards.
- 5) If there are two buildings, the main building should have office space for forensic pathologists, investigators, administrative, reception, and clerical staff; conference space for quality assurance activities and meetings with clients/users; a suitable private room for meeting with families; and a records storage area.
- 6) If there are two buildings, the autopsy building should have space for the autopsy room, body storage, x-ray performance and development, photographers, forensic autopsy assistants, the histology lab, tissue procurement area, and evidence processing and storage. Space should be built suitable for installing a CT and/or MRI scanner as these become more available and affordable. Tissue procurement organizations should be consulted when planning any tissue procurement area.
- 7) Autopsy areas should have ceiling to floor air flow, negative pressure, a minimum air exchange rate of 12 per hour, and at least one ventilated hood.
- 8) Specimen storage cabinets should be ventilated to the outside.
- 9) Design plans should be calculated on an estimated construction cost of about \$350 per square foot, including the equipment installed. For a minimum size regional center serving 500,000 population, estimated construction costs should be about \$3,412,000.
- 10) Generic formulas should be used to assist in planning. The formulas to assess *minimum* requirements are shown in the table on the next page.

Parameter	Formula
Facility space	19.5 sq. ft. per 1,000 population
Autopsy room space	2.7 sq. ft. per 1,000 population
Body storage capacity	0.042 bodies per 1,000 population
Number of autopsy stations	0.005 per 1,000 population
Number of expected autopsies	1 per 1,000 population
Number of forensic pathologists	6 per 1,000 expected autopsies (includes one Chief)
Number of investigators	9 per 1,000 autopsies (includes one Chief)
Number of autopsy assistants	7 per 1,000 autopsies (includes photographers)
Number of histologists	1 per 1,000 autopsies
Number of security and attendant personnel	6 per 1,000 autopsies
Number of reception/administrative/clerical/custodial personnel	11 per 1,000 autopsies
Total number of employees	38 per 1,000 autopsies
Annual budget	\$3.75 per capita
Personnel costs	80% of annual budget
Operation costs	20% of annual budget
Minimum construction cost	\$350 per sq. ft.

Regardless of size, construction and planning must be of a nature that the following are also given due consideration:

- Requirements for biosafety must be met
- Facility security
- Case information and management data system with security and back-up
- Emergency power availability
- Showers and locker room with changing areas
- Biohazard and medical waste disposal policies and procedures
- Laundry facilities or services
- Storage areas and inventory system for consumable supplies
- Disaster plan with a business continuity plan to ensure continuation of services if the facility must be closed or is non-operational

COMMENTS

Although a separate SWGMDI report addresses possible locations of regional centers, two comments from that report are worth repeating here. First, where appropriate, consideration should be given to a regional center serving contiguous populations in adjacent states. Second, there are some existing medicolegal autopsy centers that currently do not function as regional centers but could formally function in such a way without building a new facility. The SWGMDI has assembled a comprehensive list of medicolegal autopsy centers in the United States, and further work is needed to identify potential opportunities for evolution of some of them into regional centers (2, 11).

If the federal government were to provide construction grants to states needing new regional facilities at an estimated cost of \$3,412,500 per center, and if the previous SWGMDI study identifying a perceived need of 46 regional centers in the United States is anywhere near the real need, an estimated minimum total of \$156,975,000 would be required to construct the needed facilities throughout the United States. That estimate is based on the assumption that all regional centers would be of minimum size and would each serve a population of approximately 500,000. The total cost estimate is also based on construction of 46 centers that are perceived as being needed, but some of which may not be needed or practical. Further study is needed to identify where regional centers are truly needed and what their size would need to be in each location in order to better estimate construction costs for individual facilities.

To date, the SWGMDI has reported on the perceived need for regional centers and has made no recommendations about where such centers should actually be located. The principles outlined in this document are generic planning guides and are independent of where regional centers would be located. The SWGMDI fully understands that the generic guides may need to be modified to fit a specific locale, such as establishing a smaller or larger population catchment area or a smaller or larger geographic area to be served. It is for such reasons that further state-specific study will be needed. The SWGMDI has an ongoing project to better identify areas that may be underserved in terms of quality medicolegal autopsy and death investigation centers.

Within the death investigation community itself, there may be some resistance to the development of regional centers for reasons including, but not limited to, a fear of reduced income, increased workload, or loss of local influence and control. Another problem is that some systems that are marginally operating may incorrectly view themselves as being in no need of improvement. For example, a system may be “getting by” by performing many external exams, or not doing examinations at all in some cases when, in fact, they should probably be doing complete autopsies in more cases or examining more bodies. These are issues that will need study at the state and local levels to assess compliance with professional standards, the actual quality and scope of work in the contexts of real need and best case scenarios, and other issues such as those mentioned above.

The concept of regional centers is applicable whether the existing system is medical examiner or coroner. In either case, quality uniform investigations need to occur locally by trained and qualified people, and quality medicolegal autopsy services need to be available.

When the time comes to specifically identify places that may benefit from regional centers, numerous factors need to be considered. These factors include the possibility of decentralizing, consolidating, cooperating across state lines, turning existing non-regional facilities into regional ones, and other factors as outlined in this report.

APPENDIX 1: A Sample Facility

The Fulton County Medical Examiner (FCME) serves a population of slightly more than 1 million, and each year processes about 2,400 death reports, performs about 1,000 autopsies, and conducts about 900 on-scene investigations.

The FCME facility was built in 1999 at a cost of \$200 per square foot, including equipment. The facility consists of three separate buildings:

- One building houses office space for all administrative, clerical, investigative and medical staff, and several conference rooms.
- A second building includes the primary autopsy room (8 stations), a histology lab, an x-ray room, evidence storage and processing areas, a photography office, offices for forensic autopsy assistants, a laundry room, two large body cooler areas, the body receiving and release area, and a tissue procurement area.
- A third building has 2 autopsy stations, a body cooler area, a small anthropology workspace, and storage space for skeletonized remains. This building is used for decomposed, skeletonized, or other cases in which isolation is preferred.

Each building has its own HVAC system, and the buildings are connected by covered outside walkways. Autopsy areas have OSHA compliant ceiling to floor air flow, a minimum of 12 air exchanges per hour, and negative pressure relative to adjacent areas.

Construction was primarily with concrete block, decorative brick external façade, sheetrock walls, grid ceilings with drop-in tiles, epoxy resin floors in autopsy and related areas, and impermeable synthetic coverings on the walls of autopsy areas. Ample free parking is available for employees and visitors. The grounds are secured by fencing, controlled access gates, and video surveillance. The only laboratory is for histology services. All specimens for forensic analyses are sent to the state crime lab or to hospital or private laboratories.

Assuming a 4% annual inflation rate since construction, the estimated cost of building a similar facility today would be \$11.8 million or \$357 per square foot.

In 2012, the FCME office was fully accredited, operated in compliance with NAME and other professional guidelines and standards, and operated at \$3.78 per capita annual budget.

For a hypothetical catchment area of 500,000 population, an analogous annual budget would amount to \$1.9 million.

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