

Manager's View

**A message from
County Manager Tom Zdunek**

“The Silver Lining”

November-December 2013

Unless you've been completely ignoring the news media lately, you've probably heard about the county's recent financial situation. Regardless of what you may have heard through the grapevine, the county remains solvent with the full ability to meet its payroll and other obligations. We're in a situation where more of our funding is tied up in long-term investments than we'd like—leaving us cash-strapped and in a position where cashing in those investments may result in a loss. In addition, State regulations require that we adjust our budget to match any decrease in the value of our investment holdings. While this is obviously not an ideal situation, it is our current one and we must ride this storm out by being prudent and smart in how we manage our expenditures and ensure that our future investments meet our financial needs.

While it would be easy to use our current predicament to paint doom and gloom scenarios about the future of the county, I, for one, choose to view this as an opportunity. Situations such as our current one provide an ideal opportunity to re-evaluate our programs and services and focus our efforts. Earlier this year the Board of County Commissioners adopted a strategic plan for the county. If you have not reviewed it, I encourage you to become familiar with it. It is available from my web page, the BerncoView site and the county's Insider. Along with our statutorily and constitutionally mandated services, the plan serves as a tool to help us focus on priorities that help build a better community for our residents.

Recently department directors participated in a brainstorming session that resulted in a lengthy list of potential revenue-enhancing and cost-saving measures. This was not an exercise without meaning or results. We will be taking immediate action on ideas generated by that brainstorming session that can be implemented quickly and that will result in greater efficiency in operations or a reduction in expenditures. This represents a commitment to our goal of being a good steward of taxpayer dollars. So while we may not be in an ideal situation, it is up to all of us to find the silver lining and use this as an opportunity to refocus our efforts on our strategic direction and live up to our commitment to taxpayers.