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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **THIS VALENTINE’S DAY FEBRUARY 14 OZAUKEE COUNTY ROLLS OUT “GENEROUS JUROR PROGRAM”!**

Using an innovative program model to deliver needed services without utilizing new tax dollars, on Feb 14<sup>th</sup>, Valentine’s Day, Ozaukee County will implement the “Generous Juror Program” to allow jurors to donate juror fees for needed local programs. Supervisor Nancy Szatkowski, who authored resolution #10-51 recently adopted by the County Board on a 27-1 vote, explained that this program “has been used in Eau Claire County, Wisconsin and various other counties around the country at no cost to the taxpayers. The real beauty of the program is that the donations will be voluntary and the monies will help fund the essential local programs that contribute to the quality of life in Ozaukee County. Revenues to our County from the State, property taxes, and sales tax have fallen in recent years, and this voluntary program will provide some additional revenue to ensure that we continue to deliver services at the high level our residents have come to expect.”

Eau Claire has spent approximately \$50,000 per year on juror pay since 2000, the year that they started their Generous Juror Program. Through 2010, Eau Claire County experienced donations of approximately \$17,000 with a maximum of \$2,500 per year. Clerk of Circuit Court Mary Lou Mueller will implement the Generous Juror program in Ozaukee County and indicated that over the last five years juror expenses have averaged about \$35-40,000 annually, with over \$50,000 in 2010. “We will provide a check off a box to allow for donations and expect that some of our jurors will help fund Ozaukee County’s court-related programs,” Clerk Mary Lou Mueller explained.

The initial beneficiary of this year’s funding will be the Ozaukee County Criminal Justice Collaborating Council (CJCC), an entity that was established in 2009 through the efforts of Mequon County Supervisor Cindy Bock, because of her concerns about substance abuse and safety in our community. The CJCC has a mission to work toward improving community safety in Ozaukee County by reducing drug and alcohol related incidences. The CJCC brings together the participating agencies in the criminal justice system, and seeks to assure for Ozaukee County a criminal justice system that provides for the public’s safety, holds offenders accountable, and offers real opportunities for individuals to change the direction of their lives. The CJCC has initiated programs such as Freedom Life Skills, Strengthening Families, and Family 1<sup>st</sup> Initiative, which improve public safety in Ozaukee County by reducing drug and alcohol related offenses, reducing the number of repeat offenders, and by saving related court costs.

The Generous Jurors resolution also calls for an annual review of the program by Ozaukee County’s Public Safety Committee to assess the results and determine the recipient of the funds that are generated by the volunteer program. Supervisor Szatkowski indicated that “I believe that the people of Ozaukee County are generous, caring, and concerned about the level of substance abuse with its high personal and financial costs; and in realizing the benefits of their donations, starting this Valentine’s Day, they will listen to their hearts to help improve community safety, enhance the quality of life in our County, and ultimately save jail- and court-related taxpayer dollars by contributing to the Generous Juror program.”