Burleigh BPZ Bulletin

Burleigh County Building/Planning/Zoning

September 2015 Volume 2 Issue 3

WHEN LIFE HANDS YOU LEMONS MAKE GRAPE JUICE. THEN SIT BACK AND WATCH AS THE WORLD WONDERS HOW YOU DID IT.

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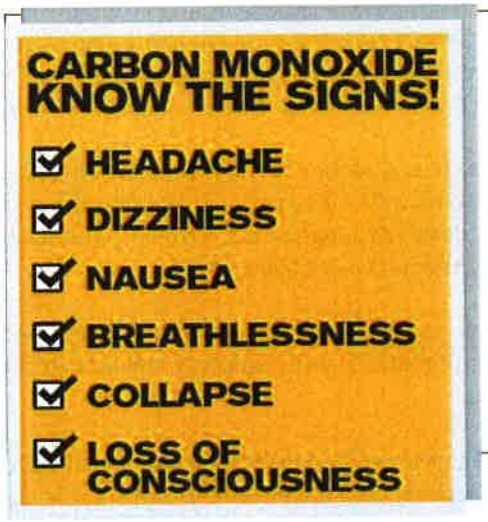
IT'S SILENT! IT'S DEADLY!

- Blanchard, ND
- Spiritwood, ND
- Fargo, ND
- Bismarck, ND
- Grand Forks, ND

Besides from being towns/ cities in North Dakota, these places all have one other thing in common. They have all suffered the loss of their citizens through Carbon Monoxide deaths.



Carbon Monoxide is odorless, colorless, tasteless, non-irritating to your lungs and its effects are mostly painless. It can cause long term health issues and death. High levels of carbon monoxide deplete the blood of its ability to move oxygen which causes suffocation. High levels can overcome a person in minutes with no warning. Most people don't even realize it is happening. Carbon monoxide poisoning can damage the brain, endocrine system, nervous system, heart and other organs. Long term exposure can even cause cellular damage.

Carbon Monoxide detectors are required in all new homes. A Certificate of Occupancy will not be issued without a carbon monoxide detector on each floor of the home. Older homes, however, do not have this requirement and consequentially many do not have them. Like a smoke detector, carbon monoxide detectors can save a life. The common thread through all these deaths is that the homes were not equipped with carbon monoxide detectors, or the detectors had been disconnected.

There are two different types of carbon monoxide detectors that can be purchased for your home.

HIGH LEVEL DETECTORS

- These are designed to prevent acute carbon monoxide poisoning. They are designed to prevent deaths and serious injury from high levels of carbon monoxide. They are fairly inexpensive at an average cost of $75.00 per unit. ***They DO NOT protect against low levels of carbon monoxide exposure which can have horrible health consequences.***

LOW LEVEL DETECTORS

- These are designed to protect against CHRONIC CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING. These detectors are more sensitive and tend to alarm more often, but that is the point of a low level detector. Low level detectors also alarm at high levels of carbon monoxide. Low level detectors usually have to be ordered online and run under $200.00 per unit. They are a more precise detector than a high level detector.

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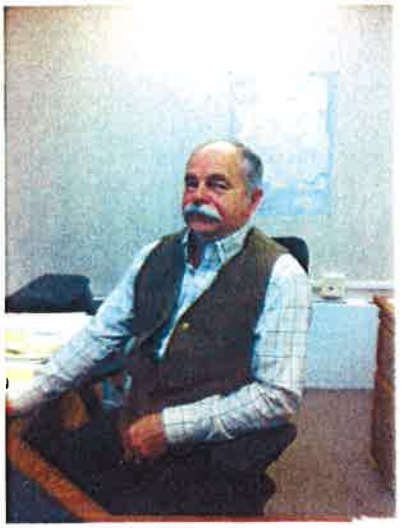
From the Desk of Ray Ziegler, Burleigh County Building Official



When the Burleigh County Building/Planning/Zoning Department was developed it was tasked with the duty of cleaning up the Burleigh County Ordinances in various areas. This task involves many hours of research, writing, rewriting and fine tuning of the ordinances. Several ordinances are still being worked on, but some have been through the Burleigh County Planning Commission for review and suggestion, a public hearing and are now awaiting approval of the Burleigh County Board of Commissioners. While some of the ordinances just needed to have small changes, several have been reworked and may affect contractors in the County.

A concern of many people building in the floodplain is the need to raise nonresidential structures, such as accessory buildings, two (2) feet above the flood stage. This ordinance has added additional costs to the property owner with questionable benefits. Besides the additional costs, there were concerns whether the additional height was needed, since the building was not a habitable living unit and the building could be constructed to accommodate flood waters in a variety of ways. Many Planning Commissioners were concerned that the building would not be covered by flood insurance if not raised. Representatives from the insurance industry, as well as FEMA, were contacted to verify if this would have an affect on coverage. It was concluded since flood insurance only pays a set amount on flood claims, it would have little if any effect on the property owner's ability to claim the maximum amount available. The Planning Commission passed the ordinance change to not require accessory building to be built 2' above flood stage.

Another concern was the fees paid for plumbing permits in the County's jurisdiction. The policy now is to have the plumbing contractor give a bid amount for a specific job and the permit is issued by that amount. It was at times confusing and time consuming. It was decided to replace our formula to match the formula used by the ND State Plumbing Board. This will make it easier for contractors and builders alike.

Several other ordinances were changed and adjusted to fit the modern day builder and make things consistent with the State Building Code. A complete list and changes to the ordinances are available for viewing on the Burleigh County website.

This also brings to mind a new addition to the Building/Planning/Zoning area of the County's website. We now have added an area to publish the Planning Commission Public Hearing Schedule. If there is an item on the Planning Commission schedule for a public hearing it will be posted on the website before the notice is published in the Bismarck Tribune. This will give the public a chance to review the hearing notice online before the meeting.

Rewriting and redrafting ordinances was just one of the many tasks that were given to the Building/Planning/Zoning Department when It was established on January 1, 2014. One of the goals was to make the overall process easier and faster for the public and builders in the county. We are always open to suggestions and ideas. Feel free to stop in our office and talk to Marla or myself with your suggestions.

Accessory Building raised 2 ' above flood stage.

"The Golden Ticket!"
by Marvin Dahle
Code Enforcement Officer

The "Golden Ticket" for builders, lenders, and homeowners is the Certificate of Occupancy. The CO as the Certificate of Occupancy is called certifies the house has had a final inspection, has passed that inspection, and the house is now ready to become a home. It also certifies that the house can be occupied. It is against the ND Century Code to occupy a house without a CO and is subject to penalties and fines up to $500.00 per day.

When doing a final inspection, I have a checklist of items to inspect to make sure the house is safe and is up to current building codes. These include items inside and outside the house. If I see an item that must be fixed for final approval, I list it on the inspection sheet which is usually located in the mechanical room of the house.

When I arrive at a location the first item I look for is the house number, which is required before the CO is issued. I check the grade of the landscaping, which is approximately 5% and swales if needed. On the outside walk around I check penetration in the siding to make sure they are water tight and rodent proof. Roofing and vents out of the shingles are also check at this time.

Once inside the house, I have a different checklist I use. I check the stairs and stairways to make sure they have the proper height and depth, hand rails and railings. I check the windows to make sure they open and are not located in an area that would require safety glazing. In the basement where windows are a means of egress, I check if the windows are 5.7 sf and have a clear opening and at times a ladder.

I check all the doors making sure the hardware is installed correctly and the doors swing in the right direction. I also check the patio doors to make sure the deck is complete. If the deck is not complete the patio doors must be secured so they cannot be opened, usually some type of blocking is used.

While doing the interior walk around, I am also checking all the plumbing fixtures to make sure they have code compliant valves and traps which are in working order. I check for fans in the bathrooms and in general the whole heating system. I check the registers to make sure they are on and in working orders. I make sure smoke alarms are installed and at least one (1) carbon monoxide alarm.

In the County, the State Electrical Board is responsible for all wiring inspections. I rely on them to make sure everything is up to code. They do inspections during the building process and do their own final inspection.

On leaving the house, I check all the exits for proper landings and railings once again, and I also inspect any decks to make sure they are anchored properly, have the right support beams and are code compliant when it comes to railings and stairs if needed.

The final step before I issue a CO is checking to make sure all trades are permitted, inspected and are code compliant. Each house gets many different inspections during the building process, so checking to make sure all trades have been inspected and code compliant is a very important step. If all inspections are passed, I will issue the CO, which is sent to the builder. A copy is maintained in our office, since many banks require a copy of the CO and usually all the inspections.

Growing, Growing, Growing

Drive around Burleigh County and you will see growth everywhere. Some studies indicate that Burleigh County will grow to over 136,000 people by 2040. It seems a long time away, but it is not that far into the future that we shouldn't start planning now.

Burleigh County and the Bismarck-Mandan MPO have joined together to study the land use in Burleigh County. This study looks at 11 townships with 300 square miles of Burleigh County. The study is designed to work with the Burleigh County Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in May of 2014. This plan will guide the growth of the county in future developments, set goals and objectives for future infrastructure, the community's needs, and sets a land use map to reflect adopted policies. It does not change the current zoning of any property in the county.

Several meetings were held in July to meet with people from the county to explain the study and find out more about Burleigh County. Several things were uncovered in these meetings:

- Most people who attended the meetings have lived in the county for over ten years, and expect to remain in the county and plan for their children to stay and raise their families here.
- Most live here because they like the rural lifestyle.
- Most people expect the growth of the county to decrease their quality of life.
- All agree that land use should be compatible with zoning decisions.
- Most agree development should be close to the cities and towns.

Growth in Burleigh County is happening and it looks like it will continue in the future, but that does not mean you have to allow this growth to happen without a say in the decisions that are made concerning development. Public hearings and property owner's notifications allow for you to express your opinion at the time of development, but joining in the land use survey allows you the opportunity to have a say before the development starts in your neighborhood. Several meetings will be held in September and October, but you can also participate in the online survey through October 1st. Just go to https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BurleighGrowth2015 . Your answers to the survey will remain anonymous, but are very important to the land use study. To date only 192 people from the county have answered the online survey and their opinions and answers will be included in a study that will affect people in the eleven townships that participated in the study.

October is a busy month for the analysis team at KLJ, the company selected to complete this study. They will be reviewing, summarizing and formulating the land use study. A draft of the study will be available for public review at the end of October. KLJ will again conduct community meetings and make necessary adjustment to the plan, with the final draft ready for submission in December.

This land use Study is very important for development of the county. It is a plan to direct future development and a guide for infrastructure development. Take the time to complete the survey, attend the meetings or just let us know how you feel about the development going on around you. This is your home and you should have a say in how it is developed .

DATES OF UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS:
Exhibits open at 6pm—Presentation at 6:30pm

September 29 - Horizon Middle School

October 1— Menoken Elementary School

But, The Football Game Is On!!

Yes, summer is almost over. Many things have probably happened this summer, some good, some not so good. Many people worked on their yards and homes, some maybe moved into new homes. Now with the leaves starting to change color it is again time to do the fall home maintenance projects. Last year our newsletter focused on getting your home's foundation ready for the winter. (Check that Foundation – BPZ August 2014) Checking the foundation of your home is a very important task, but there are also projects that can be done around the home to prepare for winter. Quick and easy tasks, that look hard, and sound hard, but make a big difference and can get you out of working on a Honey Do List when you want to watch football on Sunday!

Check your valves: ND winters can be mean to water pipes. Now is the time to locate and check all the important water valves in your home. While you check the valves, take a few minutes and label them so if disaster strikes you know which is the main water valve, the water heater valve, the hose valves etc. Inform other family member where they are so if they are checking on your home while you are gone, they know where the valves are located.

Drain your water heater. This should be completed every six months. Sediment buildup on the bottom of your water heater can hinder the efficiency of your water heater. Using the tanks drain valve, carefully drain a few gallons of the hot water inside.

Check your fireplace and chimney: Before you light that fireplace to chase away the chill, have your fireplace clean and checked. If you have a gas fireplace, TURN OFF THE GAS VALVE BEFORE CLEANING! Simply brushing or vacuuming the control compartment and the burner once a year will help your fireplace last years. Inspect the vents for damage, wear or obstruction. Look for rust spots, streaks and holes in areas exposed to the elements. Since most gas fireplace manufacturers recommend a professional inspection at least once a year, now might be a good time to have this done.

Change furnace filters and inspect the duct work. Replacing the filters on your HVAC systems every 1 – 3 months will help your furnace run more efficiently and the air will be cleaner. In the winter you can even use high-performance allergen air filters to help with the dusty air of a winter home. Check your duct work for cracks and leaks.

Check your ceiling fans. Now is the time to change the direction of your ceiling fan. In the fall and winter your fans should run clockwise in direction when you are looking up at the fan. This will create a soft updraft which will circulate the rising heat without blowing it on you.

These are just a few things that you can do around the house on a Saturday afternoon. They are quick and easy. If you want you can even rub a little dirt on your face and tell your spouse you have been hard at work preparing your home for the winter. It even works as a way to make watching football on Sunday a little easier because you worked so hard on Saturday!

Burleigh County Building/
Planning/Zoning

221 N 5th Street
PO Box 5518
Bismarck, ND 58506-5518

Phone: 701-221-3727
Fax: 701-221-3726

Building, Planning and
Zoning for a brighter future

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE BURLEIGH COUNTY WEBSITE!

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICES FOR THE BURLEIGH CO. PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS ARE NOW BEING POSTED

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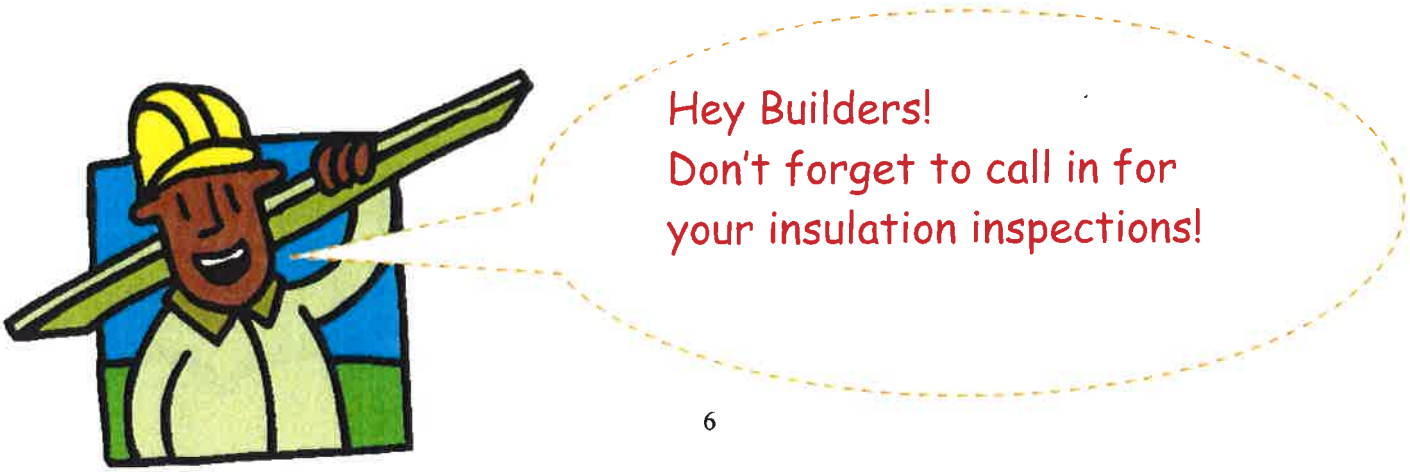
No matter what kind of detector you purchase placement is crucial.

- Place them near sleeping areas
- Place detectors on each level of your home
- Read the manufactures installation instructions.
- Since carbon monoxide is about the same weight as air it can be placed at any height. The best, however, is at eye level and where it can be easily heard.
- For additional protection place one about 10' to 15' from the furnace or any other fuel burning sources

If you are interested in more information about carbon monoxide poisoning and detectors a good website to check out is http://carbon-monoxide-survivor.com. This website offers information on symptoms of exposure, treatment and recovery and just about any question you could have about Carbon Monoxide!