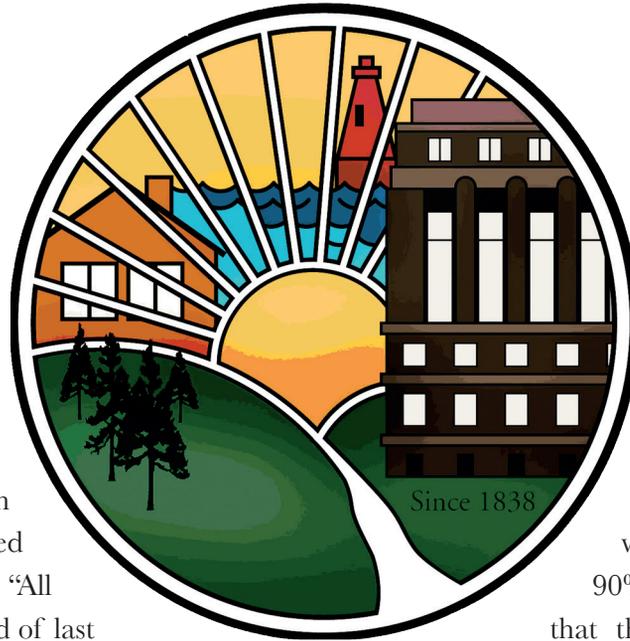


SHEBOYGAN COUNTY
Engaging Employees In
All Employee Summit



—Michelle Gormican Thompson,
Thompson Communications

When Sheboygan County hosted their first ever “All Employee Summit” at the end of last year, it was not the starting point for open communication for those working for the county. Rather, it was a continuation of a conversation that began months earlier.

“Organizations should not be afraid to ask their employees for feedback and suggestions,” said Sheboygan County Administrator Adam Payne. “The All Employee Engagement Survey and Summit was an important initiative and I’m grateful for the feedback, constructive criticism, and the efforts of our team to make improvements going forward.”

An independent third party consultant, The Leading Edge, managed the anonymous online survey, which over 500 employees completed. The purpose of the survey was to help identify organizational issues through meaningful input from all employees and managers. It provided employees with an opportunity to give confidential feedback regarding the county work environment, manager effectiveness, processes, professional development and culture.

Overall, the survey results were very favorable, with over 90% of employees responding that they enjoyed their work and found it challenging. Although pleased with the positive feedback, the survey also identified a number of opportunities for improvement, and communication was among them.

“Sharing information, offering professional development and technology training, providing more frequent feedback on performance, and celebrating success were among some of the themes for improvement,” said Payne. “We took this feedback and formed cross-departmental teams to develop recommendations and action plans for improvement, which were then shared with all employees.” Individual departments also prepared recommendations and action plans specific to their programs and areas of responsibility.

These themes became the foundation of the All Employee Summit agenda, which highlighted strengths and weaknesses from an organizational perspective.

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Engaging Employees In **All Employee Summit**

The agenda included:

- Welcome, Agenda Overview and Moderator: *County Board Chairperson Thomas Wegner and Human Resources Director Jean Gallimore*
- Employee Engagement Survey Overview: *Sheboygan County Administrator Adam Payne*
- De-escalation in the Workplace: *Wisconsin County Mutual Insurance Corporation (County Mutual) Senior Risk Management Consultant Jodi Traas*
- Mindfulness; Building Compassion, Resiliency, and Reducing Stress: *Mental Health America Executive Director Kate Baer, M.A.*
- Accomplishments, Initiatives Ahead, and Leadership: County Administrator Adam Payne

“The entire event was phenomenal, and I was honored to be a presenter,” said Jodi Traas of Aegis Corporation, which acts as the general administrator of the County Mutual. “The administration used the results of the Employee Engagement Survey to shape the agenda, following staff requests for the training I provided and the mindfulness presentation.”

She continued, “The willingness to look at the areas needed for improvement, as well as highlight the accomplishments during a presentation to all staff illustrates true leadership. It was very powerful

to hear County Administrator Payne thank specific departments for jobs well done. For the first time in my 20-year career, the transportation department (Highway) was asked to stand and received a round of applause for keeping our roads safe. When staff receive positive feedback, it creates a willingness to work even harder and many left the event with a smile.”

All total, Sheboygan County has 825 employees and though some departments could not send everyone due to work obligations, most participated in the December 5 or December 7 half-day event at the UW-Sheboygan Theatre.

“I am incredibly proud of the willingness of our employees on every level to make the county the strongest it can be,” said Sheboygan County Board Chair Tom Wegner, who presented at the event. “Though there is always room for improvement, the survey results showed we enjoy a high level of employee engagement and most people are happy and proud to work for Sheboygan County.”

County Administrator Payne concluded, “We expect all of our co-workers to strive for continuous improvement and be leaders. I’m grateful to work with such dedicated and talented staff and proud of our collective track-record.”



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