

## Pottawattamie County Auditor

Jeff Jorgensen introduced speaker Marilyn Drake, Pottawattamie County Auditor. Ms. Drake has worked in the County Auditor's office in different capacities beginning in 1970



when a friend asked a busy mother of four to help with the mandate to register all county residents to vote.

Reluctantly she accepted only to stay two more weeks and the rest is history – she has enjoyed every minute.

In 1984, she was elected Pottawattamie County Auditor.

As she says, “Winning that first election was the beginning of a terrific career.” Ms. Drake continuously retained the position of County Auditor until her upcoming retirement at the end of the current term. She is running for the Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors and the election is in November.

Ms. Drake shared some courthouse stories including this one. Did you know that the laws of the State of Iowa provide that the County Assessor's salary is never to be published? Well, after illegally publishing the Assessor's salary, Ms. Drake learned the law real fast. The Assessor was livid with the publishing but accepted her apology.

The County Auditor's office is responsible for all county budgets, elections, all secretarial work required by the Board of Supervisors, levying taxes, payroll for 450 county employees, apply tax credit to tax statements, and transfer all properties. Pottawattamie County has 64,000 registered voters; the cost of the primary is \$125,000 for a 6% turnout. The cost for the fall General Election is \$200,000. There are 40 precincts for which three to seven people are hired for each at a rate of \$8.50; finding poll workers is difficult. All new voting machines were purchased four years ago.

You may be interested to know if you make an error on your ballot when voting, you are allowed up to three ballots to correct errors. Absentee balloting has expanded and in this fall's General Election is expected to go over 50% of eligible voters. Satellite locations for six hours of absentee balloting can be requested.

The county budget for fiscal year beginning 07/01/16 is 83 million, of which 40% is designated for law enforcement including the sheriff, jail, 911 and county attorney. There are 24 paydays; 1 million dollars, which includes deductions and health insurance, is dispersed to employees each payday. The Affordable Care Act requires certain health programs are provided by employers such as nonsmoking, diabetes and exercise; if not, fines will be assessed the employer. The County strives to meet the requirements.

Ms. Drake commented on the recent water disaster caused by a leaking drinking fountain in the Courthouse. The leak began at 7pm Friday night and was not detected until 7am Sunday morning by a 911 worker who spotted water cascading from the fourth floor. Water on the fourth floor was four inches deep and caused damage on the third and second floors also. The Auditor's office is on the second floor and the leak was just above the copier which was a total loss.

