

## Dunn County Implements Building Department

Oil production in western North Dakota has certainly been a mixed blessing of job creation and tax revenues, balanced by strained infrastructure and quality of life challenges. One of those challenges has involved the accelerated construction of homes, businesses, and other buildings. The county is required to adhere to state building codes which are essential to protecting the long-term safety and welfare of the people of Dunn County. It is also an important part of insuring that buildings maintain their value and usefulness long into the future. How and what we build in our community today, matters to our residents tomorrow.

Earlier last year, the county commission unanimously adopted the North Dakota State Building Code as the standard for construction within the county. The next step in the process was the establishment of a building department and permitting process. **Effective October 9<sup>th</sup> a permit has been required for all new construction projects within the jurisdiction of Dunn County.** Residential and agricultural buildings located within the Rural Preservation district will be exempt from the traditional permitting process in accordance with state and county code but will still require a **Notice of Construction with the Planning and Zoning Department.** Also, all commercial and residential projects currently under construction prior to the effective date for building Permits must be registered with the Dunn County Planning and Zoning department. There is no charge for registration of existing projects.

**When do I need a permit?** There are multiple types of building permits to meet different needs including:

1. Residential Construction: Standard building permit required if located outside the Rural Preservation Zone.
2. Commercial Construction: Standard building permit required.
3. Modular Construction: Standard building permit required if located outside the Rural Preservation Zone.
4. Manufactured Construction (Real Property): Setting permit required. No permit required for "Titled" (non-real) property.
5. Temporary Housing including skid units, industrial modular buildings, park model trailers (trailer homes), manufactured homes, etc. - Man camps: Temporary housing is regulated by the State of North Dakota, AND must also be permitted with the County.
6. Recreational Vehicles: No county permit required, However, recreational vehicles are not approved as a permanent residential housing option.

Please contact the building department to discuss your plans with the code official before beginning construction if you are uncertain whether or not you need a permit. Even if a permit is not needed, the code official will answer code questions and may provide valuable advice. All work regardless of permit requirements must be completed in accordance with all applicable state and local codes.

**How does the permitting process work?** Permits are relatively simple to obtain. Fill out the appropriate permit application and submit it with the necessary drawings (2 sets) to the Building Department. Please be aware that, depending on the degree of difficulty, 1st time plan reviews can vary from 2 days to 2 weeks (for larger commercial buildings). If you would like to meet directly with an Inspector, call the Building Department to schedule an appointment

Building permit applications and plans will be reviewed by both the planning and Building department staffs. Once the reviews have all been done, the listed contact person will be notified to pick up plans and comments, make the appropriate corrections, and resubmit. Once all requirements have been met, your plan will be stamped approved, issued a permit number, fees assessed, and the permit will be released for construction. The work is then inspected during construction to confirm adherence to the approved plans and codes. A Certificate of Occupancy or approved final inspection is issued when the work is completed and found to be in substantial compliance with code requirements.

**Forsgren Associates Engineering:** Under the direction of the county, Forsgren Associates Engineering is assisting with the startup and operation of the new building department. Forsgren Associates is celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> year in business and the opening of their newest (eleventh) office in Watford City. They have extensive experience providing building inspection and plan review services from many communities, as well as state and federal agencies.

**Building Department Location and Contacts:** The new building department office is located in the Dunn County Courthouse, 205 Owens Street Manning, ND 58642. You can contact Ms. Sandy Rohde, Planning and Zoning Administrator by email at [sandy.rohde@dunncountynd.org](mailto:sandy.rohde@dunncountynd.org) or by phone: (701) 573-4609. Or you may also contact the Building Official by email at [jvonweller@forsgren.com](mailto:jvonweller@forsgren.com) or by phone at (701) 260-5373. The Building Official is also available by appointment (701) 260-5373.