

# An evening with New York Times best selling author Kate Quinn

Tickets available now for the May 26 event

The Friends of the Frank B. Koller Memorial Library of Manitowish Waters invite the public to the New York Times best selling author event: "An Evening With Kate Quinn" on Thursday, May 26, at Red Crown Lodge in Arbor Vitae.

Quinn is the author of "The Alice Network," "The Rose Code," "The Huntress," and "The Diamond Eye."

The event begins at 5 p.m., the \$45 ticket includes appetizers and there will be a cash bar. Tickets are available from the Koller Library, call 715-543-2700.

This event is sponsored by Red Crown Lodge, s Resort, Trig's, Redman Realty, Betty Koller Trust, and the Penny & Bill Benson Trust.

# Vilas chief deputy illuminates drug outlook with social services

By Kelly Holm  
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

Vilas County's drug investigations are increasing involving social services, according to chief deputy Patrick Schmidt, who has a lengthy background working with the North Central Drug Enforcement Group (NORDEG).

"Historically, we've never worked as much with social services as we have (in the drug unit) within the last five or six years," Schmidt told the county social services committee on May 17. "Now social workers are over at our office dealing with cases on a regular basis. When we get a case, when we start working a case, right off the bat we're contacting Kate (Gardner, director of Vilas social services), and she's assigning somebody."

Schmidt said that the vast majority of drug

cases Vilas County investigates concern heroin, opioids or methamphetamine.

In 2017, the Wisconsin State Journal published data showing that Vilas County, alongside nearby Ashland and Iron counties, topped the state for numbers of babies born addicted to opioids.

"Nowadays, we're going in with tape measures and measuring how far off the ground a needle is that's loaded with heroin, because you're looking at child endangerment," he continued.

Schmidt elaborated that he would like to improve upon law enforcement's dealings with social services concerning drugs, citing a disconnect that he thought could be bridged by creating another party that would work in both departments.

As an example, he brought up a grant-funded position investigating pill cases that TJ

Bill, now the Lac du Flambeau police chief, occupied in 2009. The county expects to receive around a million dollars from a \$400 million settlement three opioid manufacturers are paying to the state of Wisconsin, and Schmidt suggested that these funds could be used to create a similar position.

"If we (have) an opportunity to try it, it's not a bad thing," Schmidt said. "To have a cop that's trained in social work, or at least who has that connection, I think would benefit both departments."

### Potential department reorganization

Gardner and committee chair Marv Anderson discussed the social services department's understaffing, in the context of a chart outlining the potential reorganization of the department's report-

ing structure that would lift several employees to supervisory status, under a family services unit manager position.

"Right now, (Gardner) has what I call absolute vertical structure. Fourteen people report directly to (her) from a supervisory standpoint. This is a complete change, a flattening of the organization," Anderson said. "Right now, we don't really have people who are in what we term supervisor roles, though in many cases that's what they're doing. This (chart) simply recognizes that and it has the potential to have impacts on our budget as well, in terms of bringing them up to a pay grade that's supervisory."

The reorganization is still in the workshopping phase.

Kelly Holm may be reached at [kellyholm@lakeland-times.com](mailto:kellyholm@lakeland-times.com).

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