

# Centre adult services director dies at age 60; Bob Ott called ‘Mr. Fix-It’ to those in need

October 14, 2010 - By SCOTT JOHNSON - [sjohnson@lockhaven.com](mailto:sjohnson@lockhaven.com)

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BELLEFONTE - One of Centre County's most valuable people for helping those in need has died.

Bob Ott, director of the Centre County Adult Services Department, died Tuesday after a period of illness. He was 60.

Commissioners Steve Dershem and Rich Rogers said Ott's selfless dedication to others will be sorely missed.

"He was Mister Fix-It," said Dershem, who worked with Ott during his last seven-plus years as commissioner.

"As the adult services director, his real value was not only administering the program, he was responsible for quite a network of providers throughout the county," Dershem said. "If there was a hole in the safety net, he could always find somebody to find the funds to help the problem."

It's that knowledge that led to Ott's designation as "Mr. Fix-It" in county government.

"There's no way to calculate the thousands of lives he's helped and the lives that he has changed," Dershem said.

Rogers agreed, saying Ott was a "consummate professional and always put the needs of everyone else before his own."

In addition, Dershem said Ott was able to leverage government funds to the "maximum" and found "every opportunity" to help others.

"He was quite a man," Dershem said. "He worked with just about everybody in the community. It would be hard to find an organization or a nonprofit that did not honor him or recognize his achievements. He led the charge to provide quality human services for at least the seven-plus years I have been commissioner. This is going to be a tragic loss. His knowledge and caring is tough to quantify..."

"He was an incredible individual and very humble," he continued. "Whenever there was something going on like a fire or an individual personal tragedy, he made sure those folks had the resources to make it. Just about everyone in the community came before him. Even when he

was feeling ill, he was in here shepherding his programs to make sure they were being taken care of."

Unfortunately, the commissioners now have the task of trying to replace Ott.

"A lot of people think they know what he did. They don't," Dershem said. "He was Mister Fix-It... the go-to guy... The memory, the network and organizations he had connections with, I don't know how you can re-establish that."

Rogers agreed, saying the relationships Ott has built over the years were the "envy across the state."

"The benefits he brought to folks, but simply making a call or two no matter what time of the day it was," he said. "He was able to pull together the assistance needed. He didn't rest until he took care of the situations for the needy."

Ott worked for the county for 31 years, and was behind development of the Adult Services Department, which helps or tries to find help for those in need between the ages of 18 and 59.

He is survived by his wife, Sue, of State College, and two children, Adrienne and Devin.