

TOWN OF OREGON NEWSLETTER

April 2005

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Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

The Dane County Sheriff's Office would like to remind residents of a few basic bicycle and pedestrian safety tips. With the increase of bicyclists and pedestrians using the county highways, please keep in mind the following information.

According to Wisconsin State Statutes, a bicycle is considered a vehicle. This means the operator of the bicycle is subject to and is granted the same rights as the operator of any other vehicle. This includes obeying the rules of the road.

A bicyclist should obey all traffic rules, signs and traffic signals. In addition, cyclists should ride on the right side of the road with traffic, not against it. Stop at stop signs, making sure traffic is clear before you go and always use the correct hand signals before stopping or turning. Riding two abreast is permitted on any street as long as other traffic is not impeded. A motorist passing a bicyclist in the same lane is required to give the bicyclist at least 3 feet of clearance, and to maintain that clearance until safely past.

The proper clothing is also important when riding a bicycle. A safety helmet should be worn at all times. 85% of all head or brain injuries could be avoided if cyclists wore bicycle helmets. Be sure the helmet fits well, covering the forehead. The bicyclist should wear bright/light-colored clothes or clothes with retro-reflective material. Bicycling at night requires a white front headlight and a red rear reflector. The white front light must be visible to others 500 feet away.

The red rear reflector must be visible to others between 50 and 500 feet away.

The most common causes of adult bicycle accidents are: motorist turn/merge into bicyclist's path, motorist driving out from a stop sign, motorist exiting a driveway or alley, bicyclist turn/merge into motorist path. Please be aware of these causes and use caution.

Both rural and urban pedestrians need to be on the lookout for motorists whenever and wherever they walk. Before you step into a roadway, look left, right and left again for turning and approaching vehicles. Be aware of vehicles leaving driveways and alleys, and keep looking for vehicles as you cross the roadway.

In rural areas, always walk on the left side of the road facing oncoming traffic. Be sure drivers can see you, whether you're crossing the street, walking through a parking lot, or past a driveway or country road. It's a good idea to wear light, bright, or fluorescent colors during the day. At night, carry a flashlight and wear retro-reflective clothing.

For more information or questions call: Community Deputy Leslie Fox 833-9560

Assessor's Report

There will be some changes this year. A new class of property has been created called forest cropland. Forestland that falls into this class will be reduced in assessed value by fifty percent.

Agricultural land use value will probably be unchanged. The Township is buying some new assessing software this year and we will be converting our files to the new system. The conversion will probably not be done until next year.

-Andy Blomstrom

Brooklyn Fire and EMS

The Brooklyn Fire and EMS District, on January 26, 2005, approved the construction of a 1.5 million dollar station. The station will be located on five acres of land, on Highway 92, west of the Village of Brooklyn.

The District plans for construction for the new station will begin in the fall of 2005 with completion in 2006. The new station will be cost efficient, without a lot of bells and whistles.

The new building will provide for all the districts basic requirements. As the Fire and EMS District increases, there will be space for future expansions.

-Mark E. O'Brien, Representative

Town Board Report

This past winter was a challenge with all the cold, snow and rain. The frost went deep and when it warmed up and rained it caused much flooding in several areas. Some of the roads were under water and ditches were full. When the weather warms up, we will need to do some ditch cleaning and culvert cleaning to get some of the standing water problems solved.

The Town will also be doing lots of shouldering to help keep water draining off the roads. In the Spring the Town also trims trees for visibility and so that branches don't hit and damage vehicles or equipment on the highway.

The Town put up weight limit signs on several roads to keep off some of the larger trucks to help save our roads.

Some Town roads the speed limit has been reduced so watch for the new speed limit signs on some roads.

Thank you to the Oregon School Staff and Students of Ms. Sue Schultz Advanced Desktop Publishing class for putting this newsletter together and printing it. Thanks Ms. Schultz and Mr. Bohse.

Ruth Klahn has decided to retire after 30 years as Clerk. Please stop by on Friday, April 8th, between the hours of 4p.m. – 7p.m. to thank her and wish her well. The Town is really going to miss Ruth, and thanks her for all her years of hard work and service. Ruth, we wish you the best in retirement. The Town Board will be hiring a new clerk in April.

Union Road Rebuild

If you have driven or bicycled on Union Road between Lincoln Road and County "A" recently, you have probably wondered when the Town was going to do something about the many ruts and potholes. After many years of planning, Union Rd. is going to be rebuilt this summer, following the recommendations of Pam Dunphy of the Dane County Highway Department.

This section of Union Rd. will receive significant upgrades.

The road will be widened to twenty-six feet with a two foot shoulder and the "S" curve at the railroad crossing will be softened. The portion between Locust Grove Rd. and County A will be paved with a five inch mat of hot mix black top to better accommodate the truck traffic between County A and the Payne & Dolan quarry. The remainder will have a four inch mat of blacktop.

New ditches and some culvert extensions will be added. All this will be accomplished without removing any of the trees that line the road.

The Town Board has noted over the past few years that there has been a marked increase of people using Union Rd. for bicycling, jogging, and as a shortcut to Brooklyn from the new housing developments on the southwest side of the Village of Oregon. The Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization in its final report Bicycle Transportation Plan for the Madison Area and Dane County, maps Union Rd. as a "Lower Volume Roadway" connector between the Village of Brooklyn and the Village of Oregon. This route also connects the Village of Brooklyn through the Town of Oregon to the Madison-Freeport rail line trail and to the Capital City Trail.

The Village of Oregon has planned a trail head in the new Westside Community Park on West Netherwood Rd. This trail head would connect the Madison-Freeport rail line trail and the Ice Age Trail east through the City of Fitchburg and the Town of Oregon to the Village of Oregon; then east and north through the Town of Dunn to the Capital Springs Centennial State Trail and the Badger State Trail. The improvement of Union Rd. will enhance this connection south to the Village of Brooklyn and on to Rock and Green Counties.

The Town Board applied for and received a grant of almost \$20,000 from the TRIP (Town Road Improvement Program) fund for this project.

Thank You Town Patrol Men

Winter is finally nearing the end. It's been a very long, trying winter with all the slippery and flooding conditions for our Town Patrol men. I feel they have done an excellent job at keeping our roads clear and dry. The men have also done a great job in keeping the equipment in good operating condition. So next time you see our full time Patrol men (Ron Outhouse and Harlen Heller) or the part time men that help with plowing (Dennis Wendt and Romaine Ace) give them a "Thanks for a job well done."

Clerks Corner

The Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) is moving ahead. Many of you, as voter, have already given us your driver's license number, which is a requirement of this program. I would like to personally thank the election inspectors, especially Karen, Deputy Clerk, who have provided excellent service for the 4 elections held in 2004. As long as we are talking about voting, as the person in charge of our local elections, I think a picture ID should be a must for voting. Call Governor Doyle at 608-266-1212 and encourage him to sign this legislation, if you agree.

Don't forget to vote on April 5th for your local officials.

I'm saying good-bye to the Clerk's position at the end of this term. I've promised the Town Board that I'm not moving. I actually like living here. Lloyd and I need more together time after 30 years as the Town Clerk.

Office hours are changing on May 1st to five days a week. The Board and the new clerk will determine the times. Until then the hours are Monday thru Thursday, 8 a.m. to Noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Fridays are available by appointment.

Town of Oregon Recycling Center (TORC) hours are: Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. year round. From May 1st to October 1st, the hours are 2 to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays. Ask an attendant if you have questions. They will be very happy to help you. A brochure on recycling is available at the office or the information is on our Web Site. A vehicle ID is required for your use of the TORC. The ID costs \$1 and is available only at the office. Punch cards, with 20 punches, are used for trash that is not recyclable. These may be purchased for \$30 at the office or at the TORC site when they are open. The only change made this year is an increase by \$20 for each tire brought in still on the rim.

Building Inspector hours: Tuesday and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or you may phone Bill Glenn at 698-7495 to schedule a different time if needed. Inspections need to be scheduled directly with Bill.

Town Treasurer: Rhonda LaFlash, issues dog licenses and if you did not save the application that was mailed with your property tax bill, you may obtain the form by contacting Rhonda at 455-1228 or pick one up at the Clerk's office. When you mail in the application, enclose all of the information and a self-addresses stamped envelope and mail to: Rhonda LaFlash, 5721 Bellbrook Road, Brooklyn, WI 53521. Remember the second installment of real estate taxes will be due on or before July 31, 2005 and mailed to the Dane County Treasurer. Instructions are on the back of your bill and a notice will be sent from Dane County.

-Ruth Klahn, Clerk

From the Building Inspector

It was a busy year in the Town of Oregon for 2004 Building. There were a total of 214 permits written, ranging from new homes to new roofs. A total of 19 new home permits were issued with an average cost of \$314,000.

A reminder to everyone, all new construction and additions require a Dane County Zoning permit and a local building permit.

The only exception to this is for agriculture use only. A horse barn does not qualify for Ag use.

Alliant energy now requires state mandated inspections on all new electrical services and upgrades to existing services. These would require a permit issued through the Town.

If you have any questions regarding permits or inspections, call me at 698-7495.

-Bill Glenn

Constable Report

Over 5,100 patrol miles and 270 patrol hours were logged. There were 153 Park checks conducted; 20 liquor license background checks; 7 vacation check requests and 38 written reports were done.

Something new for 2005 is that the Town has gone in with the Village of Oregon Police Department and purchased a portable radar board trailer. The trailer will be set up on a rotating schedule with Oregon and Verona. The trailer monitors vehicles speeds and warns drivers of excessive speeding. It also monitors number of vehicles traveling the road, date and time. It will be a great aid to the Town for making future road repair decisions and traffic enforcements.

-Gary Wackett, Constable

Planning Commission Report

The Planning Commission of Oregon has had another busy Fall and Winter Season. With many public hearings and applications for land use changes. Many hard decision were made for both residential and commercial problems that were presented to us. Monthly issues presented to us involved many late night meetings through out the cold season. Beside the normal monthly meetings we had numerous work sessions, which resulted in a completed Site Plan Ordinance for future business needs with in our Township.

We are actively pursuing a completion of the Comprehensive Plan for the Town. We hope to have this completed by year end. This will be our main focus for the up coming months.

I would also like to thank the Towns people for coming to the Planning Commission meetings and participating. We value your input of thoughts and needs for our Town to continue to be the great place to live that it is today.

-Darryl Weber, Chairman

Town Clerk, Ruth Klahn, Retires after 30 years

Ruth Klahn, Clerk of the Town of Oregon, will be retiring in April after serving the Town for 30 years. Ruth, and her husband Lloyd, moved in to their home at 157 CTH MM in 1965.

They have four sons, Bob (Brenda), Todd (Cheryl), Kevin (Erika), Brad (Lila), ten wonderful grandchildren, Chad, Phil, Jessica, Beth, Kate, Brian, Abby, Mariah and Gabrielle.

When asked, Ruth stated that her "plan for retirement" is to enjoy her family, spend time at their cottage and travel as long as they are able which hopefully will be many years.

Ruth would like to thank the people of the Town of Oregon for being able to do this job that she really enjoyed. "It was perfect when our boys were young and I could stay at home" and then evolving into a full time position. The best thing about the clerk's position is the variety of duties and contact with people

Greetings from the Wisconsin State Assembly!

As a new member of the state legislature, I have gained an interesting perspective into how our state laws are created. One of the most striking observations I have made is that, contrary to popular opinion, there are good people working hard on both sides of the political aisle on issues that matter to our families.

In the state Assembly, we have already approved on a bipartisan basis, an expansion of a health care program that will eventually mean more affordable health care coverage for Wisconsin residents. This proposal, known as CoopCare, allows farmers and small businesses to join together into a health care pool to purchase health insurance at a reduced rate. Coopcare is being successfully implemented in the Eau Claire area and I am hopeful it will come to south central Wisconsin in 2006. We are working together in the legislature to control the rising health insurance costs that are affecting our overall quality of life.

We are also working together on the state budget. As you may know, Governor Jim Doyle submitted his 2005-06 budget to the legislature on February 8th. There are many good items in the budget, but I have a general concern that in a time when we should be focusing our efforts on getting our state's finances in order, we are spending far more than the revenues we are expected to bring in. To pay for this increase in spending, Governor Doyle is suggesting we take money from separate accounts like the Transportation Fund, Energy Conservation Fund and Patient's Compensation Fund and put a large amount of money on the state's credit card. I think legislators on both sides of the political aisle will agree that we need to get away from this type of budgeting and start to live within our means so future generations of Wisconsin residents don't get stuck paying for our spending. How we move forward will be the part of a statewide dialogue in the coming months. I encourage you to share any ideas that you may have regarding that state budget with me.

Please contact me at any time if you have a question, comment or idea about a particular issue or if you need assistance regarding a state matter. You can contact me by calling toll-free 888-534-0080, stopping by or writing to 308 North, State Capitol, P.O. Box 8952, Madison, WI 53708, or by emailing me at Rep.Davis@legis.state.wi.us.

It is an honor representing the residents of the 80th District in the State Assembly!

-Rep. Brett Davis

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Thank you to the following business sponsors for our spring 2005 newsletter:

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