

OUR GREAT COMMUNITY

Quarterly newsletter of Washington County, Wisconsin
DISCOVER. CONNECT. PROSPER.



**COUNTY EXECUTIVE
JOSH SCHOEMANN**

Year in Review

The past year has been a cautious, yet optimistic reemergence into a world of ever-changing times. Despite the obstacles, such as hiring challenges, housing and transportation needs, and impact from supply chain shortages, Washington County found innovative solutions to achieve our mission to create an environment for residents and businesses to enjoy an authentic quality of life.

For instance, we have reduced the size of the County Board from 26 to 21. This streamlined structure will make county government smaller and each voice more powerful. Through the formation of the Office of the County Executive and the empowerment of a proactive County Board, the County has been able to serve its citizens in 2021 and will be even better positioned for the coming decades and for generations to come.

We had the opportunity to sharpen our skills and apply the fruits of setting priorities and living within our means as we developed our first biennial budget. The 2022-2023 budgets will address a myriad of enhancements impacting a number of County departments in serving Our Great Community. In addition to service improvements, the biennial budget will yield a tax levy reduction of \$1,000,000. This was all made possible by redirecting fund allocations to areas of need while identifying and eliminating redundancies.

We launched a “Next Generation Housing” initiative, one of the pillars of the Our Great Community vision, where we assigned a new committee to address the barriers to housing options for our adult children and their friends. Through discussions with private, public, and nonprofit partners, we have begun to strategize a plan that will build community and encourage the next generation to stay or return to the County and raise their families. This plan will create a virtuous cycle of prosperity; strengthening individuals, businesses, and civic groups.

Throughout this issue, you will learn about other innovations and examples of your county government’s entrepreneurial spirit. I’m proud of all we have accomplished and together we will continue to seek ways to enhance “Our Great Community” in 2022 and beyond!



*Residence located at 42
Union Street in the City of
Hartford. The couple in the
sleigh are not identified.
Washington County
Historical Society 000,250.*



County Board's Corner - Serving Our Great Community

Don Kriefall, County Board Chairman

In our busy lives, it is easy to overlook our civic responsibilities. Finding the time to engage with our community can be difficult. Actually, serving others can benefit the server more than those served. For too long, the few have taken up that mantle to serve our neighbors. When volunteerism increases, the burden is then shared among many. What talents do you possess, and how could you use them in public service? Be a parent leader in 4-H. Serve at the polls on voting day. There are always shifts available if you cannot dedicate a full day to serve. Serve on school boards, or in town, village, city, or county leadership. Or socially, you can support community theatre, food pantries, etc. The opportunities are many and varied. You are needed, and taking initiative to serve is important to lead us, and especially our youth, into the future.

We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves. Serving your community enhances the quality of life within it. You'd be surprised to find how easy and rewarding volunteering and service can be. Take a leap of faith and get involved. We will all be a better community for it.

On another note, this will be my last newsletter article as I am retiring from public service. It has been an honor to serve my neighbors. While I will truly miss the engagement, it is time. You'll find me in one of our great National Parks with my wife Sandy as we attempt to visit every one during our retirement. Thanks to all who serve their neighbors!



First-of-its-Kind Endowment Builds Historical Value in County

Approximately two and a half years ago, the county met with The Tower Heritage Center board to propose a \$4 million endowment to move from government support to a standalone 501(c)(3) nonprofit. This first-of-its-kind fund transfer empowers The Tower Heritage Center's new direction as an independent organization earlier this month.

According to Steve Stuckey, The Tower Heritage Center's Executive Director, "This endowment is making an incredible impact on our organization's future and mission, which is to preserve the rich history of our County and provide meaningful experiences and education for all. It helps us build a stream of revenue from our portfolio to enhance our fundraising and outreach efforts to support the broader community."

For example, The Tower Heritage Center recently partnered with the Richfield Historical Society to conduct a paint analysis of the Messer/Mayer Mill House, initiated a grant to partially fund a historic structure report for the Hartford Historic Preservation Foundation, and produced a new, "Learn Your Landmark" YouTube series.

The County is also transferring the existing city block, minus the Veterans Plaza, to The Tower Heritage Center. This transfer, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2022, will continue the active preservation of the buildings and ultimately the legacy of the county. For further information, contact Steve Stuckey at steves@thetowerheritagecenter.org.

Reminder: Pay Your Real Estate Tax

County Treasurer Scott Henke reminds you that the entire real estate tax bill, or AT LEAST your first installment, is due by January 31, 2022, to your local treasurer. If you choose to pay installments, make note that the amount due for your installments may vary. You will incur additional charges if you miss the first installment amount by the due date. For any questions, contact the County Treasurer at: Scott.Henke@washcowisco.gov.

Pictured below: BJ Karnitz, Deputy County Treasurer, and taxpayer Pamela Markgraf



Update to Marriage Requirements

Several new changes to the marriage license process have been enacted with Act 84. These changes will go into effect on July 1, 2022, with the most notable changes including the ability to apply for a marriage license in any county of the state, extending the validity of a marriage license from 30 days to 60 days, and the reduction of the waiting period for a marriage license from five days to three days.

Couples applying for a marriage license can view requirements on the Washington County Clerk's website (www.washcowisco.gov) or by calling the Clerk's Office at 262-335-4301.

Pictured below: Ashley Reichert, County Clerk



Facilitating a Win for Hartford, Expanding Dental Office

Submitted by: Sarah Stern, EDWC

As a child, Dr. Emma Dodge, DDS, was a patient of long-time Hartford dentist, Dr. Scheunemann. She was greatly influenced by Dr. Scheunemann and even declared to him that she intended to become a dentist. Dr. Emma made good on that prediction and, along with her husband, Dr. Ryan Dodge, DDS, purchased Dr. Scheunemann's practice upon his recent retirement.

Dr. Ryan is currently practicing at the clinic (now known as Dodge Dental Studio), and Dr. Emma will join him when she finishes her tour of duty with the United States Navy. The EDWC team was introduced to the Dodges by Tom Hostad of the Hartford Area Development Corporation (HADC) to help facilitate the Dodges' expansion plans in Hartford.



With the collaborative efforts of EDWC, Washington County, and the City of Hartford, the multi-generational dependence of the community for dental care has been preserved. Coupled with the expansion plans of their new facility, with groundbreaking taking place in December, the future is bright. At the same time, the Dodges move that much closer to making their dreams for their dental practice a reality. When recently asked, both doctors concurred, "Everyone from EDWC was so helpful from the moment we made contact through our loan closing. We're lucky such a valuable resource exists in Washington County."

Biennial Budgeting

One of the most essential responsibilities of government officials is to be good stewards of the tax dollars that fund operations. The State prescribes how local government budgets are presented, adopted, and executed, and each unit of government develops its own process to do so. It is important to use a collaborative process for considering mandates and shaping community priorities into a plan for how the people's tax dollars are spent.

Budget development requires thousands of cumulative hours of staff time, based on recent estimates. That's why the County has advocated for the allowance of biennial budgeting for local governments in Wisconsin. After years of hard work, our legislative efforts precipitated a change to the law that allows counties and municipalities to implement biennial budgets beginning in 2022. The County Board formalized its intent to do so in late 2020, and on November 10, 2021, the Board passed the 2022-2023 Biennial Budget – the first biennial budget for Washington County.

The change will allow more time to focus on customer service, strategic planning, innovation, and other operational improvements. Staff will also conduct a mid-biennium review so that the County can adapt to changing circumstances as it transitions to the second year of the biennium. With more focus on long-term objectives and priorities, the County is better positioned to incorporate innovation and cost savings into future budgets – continuing the rich tradition of providing a well-governed and administered County for its constituents.

VA Expands Benefits

Recently, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs added three presumptive conditions related to particulate matter exposure for Persian Gulf War Veterans from 1990 to the present.

The new presumptive conditions are asthma, rhinitis, and sinusitis. To be eligible for benefits, veterans must have gotten one of these conditions within 10 years of separation from active service. This will expand benefits for Veterans who served in:

- Afghanistan, Djibouti, Syria, and Uzbekistan during the Persian Gulf War, from September 19, 2001, to the present
- The Southwest Asia Theater of operations from August 2, 1990, to the present.

If you have a pending claim for one or more of these conditions, you do not need to do anything. If not, call the County's Veterans Service Office at 262-335-4457 for assistance.



Tips for Winter & Traveling Safely

The Washington County Highway Department shares the following tips to ensure everyone gets home safely this winter:

Tips for Driving

- Snowplows travel at 25-35 mph, often slower than the posted speeds. The driver's field of vision is also severely restricted.
- It is illegal (s.346.915, Wis. Stats.) to follow a snowplow closer than 200 feet on any highway with a speed limit of more than 35 mph while the snowplow is operating.
- It is legal to pass a snowplow, but note it's often difficult to see past the snow cloud coming off of the blade. The snowplow's wing blade can extend up to 10 feet beyond the width of the truck. The safest place for you to be driving is an ample distance behind the plow truck.

Tips for the Home

- Do not push snow from your driveway across a state or county highway. This can result in patches of hard-packed snow and potentially create a safety hazard.
- Do not pile snow over the ends of a driveway culvert. This can lead to drainage issues and possible flooding when the snow melts.
- Do not pile snow at the end of your driveway. This can cause a vision obstruction and a possible safety hazard to the traveling public if a vehicle would leave the roadway.
- Clear snow from around your mailbox. This helps prevent snow from entering the mailbox and possibly causing damage.

Thank you for considering these tips and helping the Highway Department fulfill its mission of “ensuring a safe public transportation network that is well-maintained, accessible, and enhances safe traffic flow and mobility.”

For further questions, please contact webhwy@washcowisco.gov.

WHAT'S THE HOTTEST WINTER ACTIVITY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY?

Sled Shed at Homestead Hollow

Homestead Hollow County Park in Germantown is our top recommendation for a fun sledding experience! The hill is mild enough for small children and offers enough speed for adult enjoyment (Tip - If you want even more speed, check out Glacier Hills). In 2021, Girl Scout Troop 10258 from Amy Belle utilized materials donated by Bliffert Lumber & Hardware to construct a new Sled Shed at Homestead Hollow. Several sleds were donated by the Troop, which can be borrowed, returned, and enjoyed by all ages. If you have an extra sled to spare, feel free to leave one for the community to enjoy!



1840 Brewing Burngartens

For a more relaxed winter activity, our second recommendation is The 1840 Brewing Burngartens. Relax with a cold one while your children or pets play! Firepit rentals are \$20 and include two hours of fireside beer service and your first bundle of firewood. Snacks, hot chocolate, and rotating beers are available for purchase. Don't forget to reserve your pit early because this opportunity is burning hot! Pun intended.



Snow Fence Installation – Thank You, Landowners!

The Washington County Highway Department would like to extend a huge thank you to local landowners that allow us to install snow fences on private property. Snow fence is commonly installed in fields after harvest in areas where predominant winds blow snow across open fields and roadways. This can result in hard-packing and slippery driving conditions, and often black ice. Thank you to all landowners that allow us to install snow fence on private land for increased safety!



ANNUAL 2022 PARK PASS STICKER

Washington County Park Passes are now on sale!
They make great gifts for the person that has it all!



To purchase a pass visit www.washcoparks.com/parks/passes
or call (262) 335- 4445.

OUR GREAT COMMUNITY

Several Opportunities to chat with County Executive Josh Schoemann



SCAN
ME

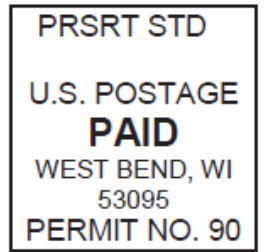


For more details visit:

www.washcowisco.gov/departments/county_executive/events



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WEST BEND, WI 53095



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