

Community Development Update

A Newsletter For and About Outagamie County Community Development

Quarter One – 2007

PARTICIPATING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION MADE EASIER

Ever wonder if you and your board are really in compliance with Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law? What records must you keep and for how long? What are the proper procedures for running a meeting of the local unit of government?

To get the answers to these questions and many others about conducting local government affairs efficiently, effectively, and lawfully, simply participate in one of the *WisLine* programs offered by the University of Wisconsin-Extension Local Government Center. Participation is easy.

Almost every county in the state has a *WisLine* location. Last year, more than 3,000 local officials participated in *WisLine* programs.

The programs can help local government officials keep up-to-date on important issues. They also provide basic education in some of the responsibilities of governance along with a review of procedures, ethics and the open meetings law.

WisLine (formerly ETN) programs feature one or more subject matter experts who interact with participants via a teleconferencing network. The teleconferencing equipment is as easy to use as your telephone. In addition, the Local Government Center sends informative packets of supplemental material to each *WisLine* site for registered participants prior to the program.

Beginning in March 2007, the Center will offer these *Wisline* programs:

- Parliamentary Procedure for Local Governments (Basic training in the traditional rules of procedure that local government officials should use in the conduct of their meetings.)
- Wisconsin's Open Meeting Law (Learn the statutory requirements of the open meetings law and current court rulings.)
- Ethics and Liability of Local Government Officials (Complete overview of the ethics and liability laws and how they apply to local officials.)
- Open Records Law and Records Management
- Minutes of Local Government Meetings

Your county UW-Extension office can provide you with *WisLine* series brochures. Or, visit the Local Government Center's website (www.uwex.edu/lgc/program/wisline.htm) for complete information about the programs, registration form, and current site information. Review these programs to see if they meet your needs and register early for these popular programs. Programs are also available by audio streaming via the Internet, and taped programs can be ordered for a fee. For more information, visit the Local Government Center web site at www.uwex.edu/lgc.

The Wisline programs are presented by UW-Extension in cooperation with the Wisconsin Counties Association, Wisconsin Towns Association, League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Wisconsin Clerks Association, State Elections Board, Wisconsin Department of Revenue, UW-Extension Local Government Center and UW-Extension county offices.

WILL REGIONAL SIGNAGE PLAN BENEFIT ECONOMY?

Lynn R. Peters, Executive Director
Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau

Do you remember the Five Man Electrical Band's biggest hit? While you may not recall the song, you'll surely remember the refrain that goes, "sign, sign, everywhere a sign."

Here in the Fox Cities it's more like "sign, sign, not a sign in sight." The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau had our area "secret shopped" in 2004. While the shoppers had lots of positive things to say about the Fox Cities, they told us in no uncertain terms that there were very few wayfinding signs to help them find our attractions. The few signs seen were small, hard to read, and poorly placed for visibility.

There are several reasons to improve signage:

- Studies show that good signs make visitors aware of things to do in the community, causing them to lengthen their stays and increase their spending. According to the Department of Tourism, visitors in Outagamie, Winnebago and Calumet Counties spent \$583 million in 2005. If each visitor spent just \$5 more, we're talking about a significant economic impact.
- Improved signage will help individuals considering a move to the Fox Cities recognize how very much we have to offer them and their families.
- Similarly, improved signage will help companies thinking about locating in our community recognize that the Fox Cities offer a wide variety of cultural, historic and entertainment options. Although these folks are most concerned about industrial park lots, workforce quality and transportation costs, they also care about the kind of community their business and employees will be in.
- Intercept studies with actual Fox Cities visitors showed that many of them never

leave the Fox River Mall area to visit any of our downtowns. Improved signage will help out-of-town visitors at the Fox River Mall find our downtown areas, insuring that they continue to thrive.

- Better signage should reduce the number of drivers making sudden turns. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, good signage contributes significantly to driver safety.

Knowing all that, the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau has been working to create a regional system of wayfinding signage. Large groups of community leaders have been involved in the discussion. With the help of a signage consultant, Corbin Design, we've divided the Fox Cities into four wayfinding districts, designed a range of different signs and identified destinations to be included on signs.

Our next step is to determine exactly where each sign goes and what it says, and we're in the process of bidding out that work to professionals. Once that's done, the Convention & Visitors Bureau will use its Capital Development Fund to provide grants to help Fox Cities communities purchase and install the signs, which are estimated to cost in the realm of \$750,000.

Want to know more? You can find a complete project report at <http://www.foxcities.org/m-newsrel51.cfm>.



“GROWING WISCONSIN” CONFERENCE DRAWS CROWDS TO KIMBERLY, TWO OTHER SITES



The follow-up conference to Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection's working lands initiative -- called "Growing Wisconsin"

was held February 26-28 -- drew over 700 persons collectively to 3 state sites, including over 200 to Kimberly. UW-Extension was a co-sponsor of the conference, which helped create awareness and understanding of alternative "tools" for preservation of privately owned working lands -- that is, farmland and woodlands.

Participants heard speakers from Pennsylvania, Maryland and Michigan describe nationally recognized models for local and state land preservation programs. A panel on "Local Leadership in Wisconsin -- Challenges and Successes" complemented the out-of-staters. At the Kimberly conference, this panel included: Chris Goebel of Glacial Lakes Conservancy, Greenville Town Chairman Randy Leiker, Appleton Mayor Tim Hannah, and Calumet County Planner Julie Heuvelman. A battery of additional breakout sessions covered the working lands initiative particulars, GIS mapping and analysis of working lands, and steps for farmland preservation policy change.

While UW-Extension does not advocate adoption of any particular policy option addressed at the conference, it does wish to work with the Outagamie County Planning Department and other local and regional entities to continue the dialogue started at this conference. There were 37 individuals from Outagamie County signed up for the conference, including 9 from the Town of Freedom alone! Diverse Outagamie County participation included representatives from local government, builders, realty professionals, Northeast WI Land Trust, consulting firms, farmers, the Oneida Nation, and county government, among others. This community cross-pollination should lead to very stimulating discussions, on the topic of how to preserve working lands while accommodating

the region's growth needs. The hope is that wise development will help preserve agricultural land.

Required is some facilitated process and structure to the dialogue, and a guarantee that all parties with a stake in land preservation or development will be heard. Mutual respect and civility will be the order of the day, if there is to be any hope of policy consensus among such divergent interests. Hopefully, such a process can lead to better directed comprehensive plans as communities update them for "smart growth" compliance. This dialogue -- in concert with discussions in other localities around Wisconsin -- also has the potential to create a groundswell for changes to the state's land policies and incentive programs.

What's your thought on how to structure such a dialogue in Outagamie County and the region? Send your suggestions to james.resick@ces.uwex.edu. In the meantime, consider reading the book "Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In" as a possible framework for a consensus process on working lands and development.

DALE FORMS BUSINESS/CIVIC GROUP



With the ambitious name of Dale Area Leaders & Entrepreneurs (DALE), the knot of businesses that formed this group has its work cut out for it. The association

came together this winter through the efforts of several businesspeople, including current co-leaders Lynn Hicks of Yourr Electric and Sue Close of Sue's Beauty Boutique & Tanning.

The group has written an initial mission statement: "DALE is a group dedicated to building a network of businesses in the Town of Dale, that wants to build community, build business, offer opportunities, and provide resources and tools to our business neighbors." While entrepreneurship is the common thread among members, there is a strong commitment to community quality of life also evident in the group.

The Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCCI) and UW-Extension have teamed up to help DALE think about its organizational development path. At its February 8th meeting, the group set the wheels in motion to address four initial strategies. It wants members to find out who their business “neighbors” are. It wants to catalog the gamut of services offered in the community. It wants to identify cooperative marketing & sales activities businesses can do with each other. And, it wants to develop a marketing approach or plan for the collective business community, listing activities and costs of implementing them.

This is a group to watch, with a lot of energy and participatory leadership. Please join UW-Extension and FCCCI in wishing the best of luck as DALE heads out on its journey toward vibrant businesses and a super community!

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW INSTITUTE REPORT EXPLAINS WHAT’S WRONG WITH SPRAWL

The U.S. population has grown by 100 million people since 1967 and is expected to grow another 92 million by 2040. The built environment has accommodated this recent growth with exurban sprawl. “We have a real problem ahead if current development patterns continue to prevail,” warns James McElfish, director of the Sustainable Use of Land Program of the Environmental Law Institute. McElfish’s new report, “Ten Things Wrong With Sprawl,” explains why.

- Sprawl development contributes to loss of support for public facilities and amenities. It encourages market failure by forcing cities to provide services like parks and libraries to people who do not pay taxes to support them.
- Sprawl undermines effective maintenance of existing infrastructure.
- Sprawl increases societal costs for transportation, consumes more resources, and separates urban poor people from jobs.

- Sprawl imposes a tax on time, mostly time spent in traffic getting to commercial and recreational facilities far from residences.

Sprawl’s contribution to the degradation of air and water quality, to the permanent destruction of habitat, and to imposing obstacles to community engagement are well documented. McElfish stresses that current patterns of development are not simply the result of market demand, but are strongly influenced by “laws, institutions, zoning codes, financing rules, government subsidies, and market failures.” The resulting sprawl “constrains our choices” and is, he concludes, why “every part of exurban America resembles every other part.” James McElfish is senior attorney and director of the Sustainable Use of Land Program at the Environmental Law Institute. His report, “Ten Things Wrong with Sprawl,” is available free of charge at http://www.elistore.org/reports_detail.asp?ID=11191. For more information about his research, contact Mr. McElfish at mcelfish@eli.org or 202/939-3840

© 2007 International City/County Management Association



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 8, 15, 22 & 29 - 3:00-4:20 p.m. – Parliamentary Procedures for Local Governments WisLines. Cost for all four is \$69.00. See first page of newsletter for registration or call (608) 262-0810.

March 20 - 6:00 p.m. – Advance Little Chute annual membership meeting, 5th Quarter Supper Club, Little Chute.

March 28 - 10:30-11:50 a.m. – Recent Land Use Case Law WisLine. Cost \$15 – pre-register by calling (608) 262-0810.

April 5 – 6:00 p.m. – Energy Coalition for a Sustainable Fox Valley monthly meeting, including presentation on Wisconsin renewable energy agenda by Ed Blume of Renew Wisconsin, Menasha Public Library.

April 11 – 2:30-4:20 p.m. – Ethics and Conflict of Interest of Local Government Officials WisLine – cost \$18. See first page of newsletter for registration or call (608) 262-0810.

April 12, 19 & 26 – 3:00-4:20 p.m. – Minutes of Local Government Meetings WisLines – cost \$54.00 for all three. See first page of newsletter for registration or call (608) 262-0810.

April 18 – 10:30-11:50 a.m. – Green Tier Program WisLine (supporting business for local economic and environmental improvement) – cost \$15. See first page of newsletter for registration or call (608) 262-0810.

SO, JUST WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

When some hear the word “sustainable,” they think of the “three-legged stool” concept, which says that sustainability is achieved when Economics, Environment and Equity (or social welfare) – the three E’s – are all working together. The U.N.’s World Commission on Environment and Development defined sustainable development as that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sarah James and Torbjorn Lahti, authors of The Natural Step for Communities: How Cities and Towns can Change to Sustainable Practices, use the Natural Step framework created by Dr. Karl-Henrik Robert as a guide to making sustainable decisions. This framework makes use of four system conditions, or guiding principles. In the sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing...

1. concentrations of substances extracted from the Earth’s crust
2. concentrations of substances produced by society
3. degradation by physical means, and in that society
4. human needs are met worldwide.

An interpretation of each condition above, found on the website www.naturalstep.org, shows the following decision criteria for communities and businesses:

1. Substitute certain minerals that are scarce in nature with others that are more abundant, use all mined materials efficiently, and systematically reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
2. Substitute certain persistent and unnatural compounds with ones that are normally abundant or break down more easily in nature, and use all substances produced by society efficiently.
3. Draw resources only from well-managed ecosystems, pursue the most productive and efficient use both of those resources and land, and exercise caution in all kinds of modification of nature.
4. Use all of our resources efficiently, fairly and responsibly so that the needs of all people on whom we have an impact, and the future needs of people who are not yet born, stand the best chance of being met.

Interested in learning more? Watch for future articles on applications of The Natural Step in this newsletter. Also, for those who really want to delve into the subject, UW-Extension is offering a book discussion group on the James & Lahti book sometime this spring. Please call Jim Resick to join, or watch the UW-Extension website for more info.