



Neighbors

Newsletter of the Walworth County Intergovernmental Cooperation Council (ICC)

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Miniature Geneva Lake, a highlight of 2016 Farm Tech Days.

Photo courtesy of Walworth County UW Extension

Farm Technology Days After-Action Report

Our October Intergovernmental Cooperation Council (ICC) meeting featured an after-action report on Farm Technology Days. Peg Reddy, Walworth County's Agriculture Extension Agent reported on the event that was held this past summer. The three-day event was hosted by Snudden Farms in the Town of Linn. Over 1,100 volunteers supported the event that attracted 30,000 attendees. Peg shared some statistics about the event including:

- Two-thirds of attendees were full- or part time farmers;
- The majority of those in attendance were from Wisconsin; and,
- Approximately 16% of attendees were from Illinois.

Highlights of event included:

- A miniature Geneva Lake
- Food tents operated by local non-profit organizations.
- UW Marching Band
- The latest developments in agricultural products and services.
- Tours of Snudden Farms.
- Education stations and Field demonstrations.

The Farm Tech executive committee, led by Jim Stowell recently paid the last bills for the event. The committee will have the opportunity to award grants to worthy youth-focused causes in the future.

The county greatly appreciates everyone who attended and supported Farm Tech Days and to the Town of Linn for its support of the event.

Mark Your Calendars

It may seem like a long way off, but the next meeting of the ICC is scheduled for Tuesday, March 21, 2017 at 6 pm. If any member has a topic they would like included on that agenda, contact Dave Bretl at (262) 741-4357 or by email at: dbretl@co.walworth.wi.us

Open Meetings, Public Records and Ethics Training

Any interested local officials are invited to attend training on the Wisconsin Open Meetings, and Public Records laws as well as the Code of Ethics for Local Elected Officials. Walworth County Administrator and Corporation Counsel, Dave Bretl, will be conducting the training in the County Board room at the County's Government Center in Elkhorn. The training will take place from noon to 2 pm on December 6, 2016. If you are interested in attending, call Emily at the County Administrator's office (262) 741-4351 to make sure we prepare enough materials for the class.

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⇒ Conservation Easement

⇒ County Funded EMS Study

Preserving Land through Conservation Easements

The Geneva Lake Conservancy educated ICC members at their October 25 meeting on an approach to land conservation known as Conservation Easements. A conservation easement is a legally binding agreement between a landowner (“grantor”) and a private or public organization (“grantee”) in which the landowner gives up one or more ownership rights to a grantee. This approach allows the grantor to continue to own the property while preserving farm land, natural resources and wildlife habitat from future development. Grantors may be motivated to forfeit development rights out of a sense of altruism or for tax advantages, or both. A panel of experts from the Geneva Lake Conservancy answered questions on the topic. Several towns and municipalities throughout the our county have actually restricted municipally-owned land from development through conservation easements. Countywide over 2,200

acres of land are in conservation easements. If residents are interested in preserving land, you may wish to direct them to the Geneva Lake Conservancy. Their phone number is (262) 275-5700.



White River County Park

Photo courtesy of Walworth County Public Works

Update on Fire/EMS Study

The Walworth County Board approved its 2017 budget on November 7. Included in that budget is a proposal to study the issue of Fire and EMS services throughout the County. The request for the study came from numerous towns and municipalities around our County. Finding enough volunteers to perform this important work has been a challenge for some departments. The goal of the study is to find ways to maximize Fire and EMS resources to improve response times. The Board approved a study group consisting of seven members: three professionals drawn from the Fire and EMS service, as well as three officials, one from a town, city, village and a representative from county government. \$35,000 has been included in the budget to assist the study committee. This money could be used to pay for a study, hire a limited term employee to provide assistance to the committee or pay for consulting services.

There will likely be many more individuals wishing to serve on the study committee than available seats. Meetings will be open to the public and I am hoping that those interested in the topic will be able to attend and provide input throughout the process. The County will be providing correspondence to towns and municipalities as well as Fire and EMS professionals in the near future to solicit applications and nominations for membership on the committee. The County Board is anticipated to make those appointments in February.