Neighbors

Newsletter of the Walworth County Intergovernmental Cooperation Council (ICC)

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CTH-DD Bridge over Honey Lake Construction

Photo courtesy of Walworth County Public Works

ICC Off To A Fast Start

The Intergovernmental Cooperation Council has held two meetings so far this year covering a wide variety of subjects. Our March 28 agenda included a presentation on POLCO, a software system designed to encourage the public to become engaged with local government. POLCO allows local governments to pose questions to the public regarding pending issues. The system uses the statewide voter registration list to ensure that each person's vote counts only once and that they reside in the particular jurisdiction. Questions can be posed in a simple "yes/no" format or designed to solicit comments. Because comments must be signed with a real name, discourse tends to be far more civil and productive than the anonymous message boards found on many newspaper websites. Later, Eric and Bernadette Russow provided an update on their efforts to promote awareness of dementia and steps communities can take to become dementia friendly. A story about their efforts is included in this newsletter.

The County's Mobility Coordinator, Al Stanek described the Wal-to-Wal Dial-A-Ride program, a new public transportation service operating in our county, also featured in more detailed in this newsletter. Public health topics rounded out the March agenda. The County's Public Health Officer, Erica Bergstrom spoke about the County's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), while Sarah Nichols, director of the Open Arms Clinic gave a presentation on the importance of fluoride in water for the prevention of dental disease.

Topics at the June 27 meeting included an update on the countywide Fire/EMS Study. County Clerk, Kim Bushey gave a presentation about plans to replace countywide voting equipment. Finally, East Troy Town Chair, Joe Klarkowski presented a plan to construct a multi-use trail linking the East Troy area to Mukwonago.

Mark Your Calendars

It may seem like a long way off, but the next meeting of the ICC is scheduled for Tuesday, October 24, 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

Become a Dementia Friendly Community

Area residents Eric and Bernadette Russow have been on a mission to raise awareness of the challenges that face those who suffer from dementia. The Russows were at our March ICC meeting to encourage members to make their communities more dementia friendly. Eric and Bernadette organize classes covering variety of dementia topics. Upcoming dates are: August 29 from 3:30-5 pm and November 8 from 9-10:30 am. Both classes will be held at the Matheson Memorial Library in Elkhorn. There is no cost for the training but pre-registration is required. Call (262) 320-7325 to register or for more information.

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County Rolls Out New Transportation Service

Walworth County has been in the transportation business for many years. The program, however has undergone some significant changes in the past year. Al Stanek, the County's new Mobility Coordinator joined the March ICC meeting to explain the new program.

Prior to 2017 the County's transportation program was limited to folks sixty and older as well as disabled residents. Thanks to a public transportation grant from the State and federal governments, the program now serves all county residents regardless of age or disability. The service is called "Wal-to-Wal Dial-a-Ride" and is provided by VIP Services, Inc. under a contract with Walworth County.

Dial-a-Ride service is limited to trips within Walworth County and co-pays apply. Seniors, sixty and older as well as children and disabled riders pay $2.50 for every one-way trip. All other adults pay $5.00 one-way or $3.50 for a trip within the corporate limits of a single town or municipality. The service runs weekdays from 6 am to 7 pm and on Saturdays from 7 am to 5:30 pm. To be sure to get a ride, it is important to call at least one day in advance. A ride may be available with short-

Wal-to-Wal Dial-a-Ride
Photo courtesy of Walworth County Transportation

er notice but can't be guaranteed. There are some additional details so be sure to visit the county's website at http://www.wal-to-wal.com or call (262) 723-4402. So far, the service has been a real hit. We started the year in January averaging 37 rides per day. In June our daily ride-count exceeded 82.

Update on Fire/EMS Study

At the request of a numerous towns and municipalities, the County formed a Fire/EMS Study Committee to explore ways to ensure the long-term sustainability of these important services. A shortage of individuals who are willing and able to put in the long hours required of volunteers is one of the serious issues facing many of our communities. Members of the study committee represent both government and by Fire/EMS community. They include: John Peters, Chief of Lake Geneva Fire Department; Bruce Vander Veen, Chief of Sharon Fire/Rescue; Dave Nelson, Assistant Chief of Lauderdale-LaGrange Fire/Rescue; Fred Schalow, Chief of Bloomfield Genoa City Fire/Rescue; Lowell Hagen, Town of Whitewater Chairman; Jim Weiss, Village of Williams Bay Administrator; Denise Pieroni, City of Delavan Administrator; Dennis Martin, Village of Fontana Administrator; Dale Wilson, Walworth

County Human Resources Director; Ken Monroe, Walworth County Board Supervisor; Dr. James Mac-Neal, Mercy Health Care; and Dr. Steve Andrews, Aurora Health Care.

The Study Committee has been meeting since March. Its first order of business has been to develop a survey to obtain information from local governments as well as Fire and EMS organizations. The government surveys should be distributed to the chief elected official in each town and municipality as well as the clerk. Assistance in completing the survey's is available from the Study Committee.

Meetings of the Study Committee are held at the County's Government Center in Elkhorn and are open to the public. You can find agendas as well as archived videos of each meeting on the County's website at www.co.walworth.wi.us.