

TOWN OF RIVER FALLS 2012 SPRING NEWSLETTER

www.riverfallstown.com



NEW TOWN ASSESSING FIRM

In November of 2011 the River Falls Town Board entered into a three year assessing agreement with Associated Appraisal Consultants, Inc. located in Appleton, Wisconsin. This is the same firm that the City of River Falls utilizes for their assessing services. Questions regarding property tax assessments can be directed to Associated Appraisal Consultants at 1-800-721-4157.

DATES FOR OPEN BOOK & BOARD OF REVIEW

Town residents are advised that the 2012 Open Book and Board of Review dates have been scheduled. The Open Book will be held on Friday, May 18th at the River Falls Town Hall, W9015 770th Ave from 1:00-3:00 P.M. The Board of Review has been scheduled for Thursday, June 7th from 6:30 - 8:30 P.M., also at the River Falls Town Hall. Residents that have concerns or questions regarding their property tax assessments are asked to meet

with the assessor during the Open Book time (an appointment is not required). If property assessment issues are not resolved town residents have the option of appealing their assessment before the Board of Review. A written or oral objection is required to be filed by the property owner 48 hours prior to the Board of Review in order to be scheduled for an appeal before the board. Objection forms will be available at the Open Book and also from the Town Clerk, Ruth Stern, at 715-425-7373; or email: clerk@riverfallstown.com.

2012 ELECTIONS

2012 will certainly be a busy election year. Town residents came to the polls on Tuesday, April 3rd to vote in the presidential primary; and for school board, county board, town board and state offices. Tom Sitz was re-elected to serve in the Town Board Supervisor III position and Brad Mogen was re-elected to serve as Town Board Supervisor IV. Elections will continue throughout the year as follows:

- Tuesday, May 8th -
Gubernatorial Recall Primary
- Tuesday, June 5th –
Gubernatorial Recall
- Tuesday, August 14th -
Partisan Primary Election
- Saturday, October 27th –
Special hours at the

- Town Hall for absentee balloting (morning only)
- Tuesday, November 6th
– Presidential Election

If absentee ballots are requested for any of these elections a written request is required to be submitted to the town clerk. Having the request submitted well ahead of the election helps to ensure that the absentee balloting process will be done correctly and that your vote can be counted on election night.

At the time this newsletter is being written a final determination has not been made on whether voter ID will be required in future elections. Please watch your local papers and listen to other local news media to stay up-to-date on whether or not you will be required to show your picture ID at the next election.

TOWN WEBSITE REDESIGN

The town website will soon be under-going a much needed “facelift”. Approximately 15 years ago former town resident, Ned Fagan, developed and maintained the first town website. While other individuals have managed the town website in the years that have followed, there have never been any substantial revisions made to it. The town recently contracted with Town Web Design Inc. to complete the website redesign project. This company also hosts the websites of other local municipalities including the Town of Hudson and the Town of Kinnickinnic. The new website will include

pictures representative of the Town of River Falls. Town Board member, Brad Mogen, has agreed to take all of the pictures, however the Town Board is seeking ideas from town residents regarding possible pictures for the new town website. Photography ideas can be submitted to Ruth Stern, Town Clerk, at e-mail address: clerk@riverfallstow.com. The River Falls Town website continues to be utilized more and more as a day-to-day source of town information. You can find the website at: www.riverfallstow.com.

**LOCAL YOUTH ASSIST
THE TOWN OF RIVER
FALLS**



The Town of River Falls has been enlisting the volunteer help of several youth in our community to carry out some important projects. This summer local Eagle Scouts will be constructing new kiosks to display public meeting notices at the River Falls Town Hall, River Falls Town Shop and at Hillwood Park. In addition, the youth will be doing some landscaping around the Town Hall. Besides the Eagle Scout projects, a couple of River Falls youth are helping to spruce up the inside of the Town Hall each month by providing cleaning services. This service is provided through the River Falls High School's Special

Education Youth Skills Program. We would like to thank these youth for volunteering their time and services to the Town of River Falls!

**TOWN HALL
MAINTENANCE WORK**
Maintenance work at the Town Hall will continue this summer and include painting the west end of the building, replacing broken windows, upgrading the public notice kiosk, and repainting the roadside sign. The concrete foundation was tuck-pointed last year, decks restained and shingles replaced. While the Town Hall seems small on election days it continues to serve its purpose during the remainder of the year. With the completion of these routine maintenance items it is hoped that the former Randall School House will continue to serve the needs of the town for many years to come and eliminate the need for an expensive building project.

**TOWN BURN
PERMITS**



The River Falls Town Board recently reviewed the process for issuing burn permits. This included soliciting input from the Pierce County Sheriff's Department and the River Falls Rural Fire Association. Both of these emergency response agencies indicated their support for the current town permit process and encouraged the town board to continue requiring a permit for any burning activities (other than small cooking/campfires).

The permit form is a good source of information listing current laws on what can and cannot be legally burned. Burning garbage in burn barrels is not allowed. The form also contains important information concerning notification requirements prior to and after the fire has been completed. (The local sheriff's department must be notified). Acquiring a burn permit may help you to avoid a costly \$700 false alarm fire call by a well-intentioned passerby that happens to see the smoke from your fire. Burn permits are good for the entire calendar year, thus any permit obtained from the town now will be good through December 31, 2012. They are available at the Town Recycling Center on Saturdays from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. and on Wednesday evenings from April through October (5:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.). They can also be obtained from a Town Board member or town employee as these individuals are available.

Since the fireworks season is approaching, town residents are reminded that firework permits need to be obtained from the Town Chair, Diana G. Smith at 715-425-5478. Please request your permit a week ahead of your event when possible. The local fire department also requires two days of advance notice if you are going to be setting off fireworks.

ANIMAL CONTROL

Town Board member, LeRoy Kusilek, continues to serve as the town's animal control officer for picking up stray dogs in the town. He can be reached

at 715-425-6185. The Town Board has given LeRoy the authority to hold dogs in his facilities for a few days prior to transporting them to the Goodhue County Humane Society in Red Wing. Oftentimes, this allows more time for a pet owner to be reunited with their dog before incurring additional fees. The River Falls Town Board recently renewed their contract with the Goodhue Humane Society to house dogs that are not reclaimed within a few days. Because these animals are crossing state lines a veterinary check to determine a clean bill of health and proof of rabies vaccination are required. The resulting fees will oftentimes cost the pet owner well over \$200 to get their dog back if the animal ends up going to the animal shelter.

The town continues to receive complaints regarding barking dogs, dogs running at-large, and failure of pet owners to clean up after their pet while walking dogs on public property and along the road right-of-way. Please be considerate of your neighbors and address these issues if they apply.



LARGE GATHERING ORDINANCE

The Town Board recently passed an ordinance regulating large gatherings in the town. The ordinance provisions apply to any gatherings where a fee is charged or where there are expected to be over 300 people gathered in one location at the same time for more than six

hours. The ordinance regulates sanitary facilities, drinking water, solid waste, fencing, traffic control, parking, emergency procedures, liquor and food licensing, and notification to neighbors. Residents meeting the ordinance criteria need to complete an application form and submit an application fee at least 30 days before the event. The application form will need to address the above criteria. In addition, the applicant will be requested to attend a Town Board meeting to discuss their plans.

FRAC SAND MINING MORATORIUM & ORDINANCE

On March 9th, 2012 the Town Board passed a nine month moratorium on Frac Sand Mining activities in the town. This time period will give the Planning Commission time to study the frac sand mining industry and determine regulations that may be necessary to protect residents and our local environment. The Planning Commission are currently considering protection of town roads from heavy equipment, noise, dust, water quality, reclamation, and other issues. While it is not expected that frac sand mining will be a major consideration to our town due to our topography and our distance from an operating railway transportation system, the board feels it is important to study these issues and have protections in place ahead of any frac sand mining business requests that may be brought forward.



MUNICIPAL LEVY COMPARISONS

In a recent study of Pierce County municipal tax levies, the Town of River Falls ranked fourth lowest out of 25 municipalities in terms of the municipal portion of the levy divided by the number of residents in that municipality. This included all the towns, cities and villages located in Pierce County. The study was based on the 2010 municipal levy (payable in 2011). In the future other studies will be completed using other factors including assessed and equalized values. This will give the town board a more comprehensive view of where the Town of River Falls ranks in these areas.

2012 ROAD WORK

Please remember that the right-of-way on a town road is 66 feet consisting of 33 feet from center line on each side of a town road (County and state roads have different standards). The right-of-way area is needed to properly maintain the road, road shoulder, and to provide for clear and safe visibility along town roads. Residents are asked not to plant any trees, shrubs, gardens in the right-of-way areas. With the mild winter the town was able to get some right-of-ways cleaned up including those along a portion of 770th Ave. (Happy Valley Road), 750th St. (Beldenville Pass), and 900th St. (South Fork Drive). More work is expected to be done beginning the week of April 16th on 950th St.

(Cady's Lane) and 690th Ave. (Forestville Rd.). The town highway department will be mowing the ditches twice this year with the first mowing in June or July and the second mowing beginning in August (the early spring may move these dates up).

The Town Board toured all of the town roads on Friday, March 16th. The board is currently working on developing a list of road work for 2012 based on the needs that were documented on their annual road tour. The biggest issue that the board deals with each year is the limited amount of funding to

pave and renovate existing roads. There are always more needs than funds available, and continually increasing road construction costs make the decisions even more difficult. It now costs over \$100,000 to pave one mile of town road. Fifteen years ago this cost was approximately \$35,000/mile.



WHAT'S UP WITH THE TOWN PARKS?

Did you know that there are seven (7) parks in the Town of River Falls? These seven are Halverson, Hillwood, Rocky Branch, South Ridge, South Valley, Anderson and Birch Cliff. As of this month, five (5) of the seven are developed and in use by local residents. These are Halverson, Hillwood, Rocky Branch, South Ridge and South Valley. Four (4) of the

five have developed walking trails and soon to be beautiful spring foliage for all to enjoy. The 5th developed park (South Valley) presently has a soccer net located within a small field and a small baseball field for young children. Funding for the town parks does not come from the town's general fund. In most cases, they have been secured through grants and funds set aside by developers.

Over the past couple of years, the Town Parks Committee has been working with local Boy Scouts from Troops 54 and 459 who are working on their Eagle Scout Projects to help enhance the parks. Some of these projects included improving trails, clearing brush at park entrances, adding picnic tables and benches and installing bat and bird houses. New projects started by scouts this year include some landscaping projects and the installation of information kiosks where we will be able to display information about the park. If you like to take a nice stroll during the day and enjoy some beautiful habitat in the River Falls area, check out one or more of our parks. To find out the location of each park, go on-line to www.riverfallstown.com and look for Parks and Recreation. If you don't have access to the Internet, this information can be seen on the bulletin board at the River Falls Town Hall. We welcome all

River Falls Town and City residents to come and see what we've done and to enjoy our parks.

The Parks Committee is saying farewell to our Committee Chair, Dennis Zielski, who is completing his sixth year on the committee as well as Rick Cleary who has completed nearly three years as a committee member. As we transition new members on to the committee, Dan Randall (djrandall13@yahoo.com) will be taking over as the interim Chairman of the committee for the next year. New on the committee starting in May of 2012 are Brian Copp and Katie Pata. Additional members are being sought. If you have interest in or concerns about our town parks, please contact Dan at the email address listed above.

TOWN OF RIVER FALLS FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

There is something about a deadline that gets things moving. The Town of River Falls Land Use Ad Hoc Committee has been working on preparing a Farmland Preservation Plan for several years and only now can we see some hope of it becoming a reality. The rules have changed several times since we started working on the plan. We feel we have made the right connection with the county so



that we will have a coordinated plan which is the center piece of the process. The plan needs to be completed in 2012. We will need to have our portion completed this June so that the county will have time to complete their portion by the end of the year. The plan then goes on to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture for final approval.

Our committee will have more information to share with our farmland owners as we get closer to approval of the plan. We will need to show justification for why our town wants to preserve agriculture but that is clearly outlined in the comprehensive plan.

THERE'S STILL TIME FOR THE ANNUAL ROADSIDE LITTER CLEAN-UP !

**Saturdays April 7, 14, 21, 28,
Wed. April 4, 11, 18, 25**

Clean your section of roadside within the Town of River Falls and bring it to the Town's Recycling Center for free disposal. You can pick up your free roadside bags at the Recycling Center. Please separate items to be recycled (plastic, glass & cans) from trash. For more information please contact: Recycling Center Administrator, Michele De Long-Reiter during Recycling Center hours of Saturday 8 a.m.- 4 p.m. and Wednesdays (April 4th through October 31st) 5 p.m.-8 p.m. 715-425-9901, or call weekdays 715-425-1477. The Recycling Center is located @ N7750 State Hwy 65, River Falls.

NEED TO RECYCLE ELECTRONICS? TRY OUR NEW E-CYCLE!

The Towns Recycling Center joined the new E-Cycle program in 2010. The following electronics can be recycled through E-Cycle Wisconsin and were banned from Wisconsin landfills and incinerators as of Sept. 1, 2010. There is a **fee** to recycle the following items, you can check out our low prices on the Town's website, click on the Recycling Center Information link on the Town's home page.

- Computers (desktop, laptop, netbooks and tablet computers)
- Desktop printers
- Computer monitors
- Televisions
- DVD players, VCRs and DVRs
- Satellite and cable boxes
- Fax machines
- Computer mice and keyboards
- Other computer accessories such as hard drives, flash drives and modems

Electronics can contain harmful chemicals like mercury, lead, cadmium and other heavy metals, as well as chemical flame retardants. When disposed of improperly, these pollutants can pose a risk to human and environmental health. Electronics also contain valuable reusable material, including steel, gold, silver, copper and glass. Properly recycling these materials reduces the need for mining

new materials. Electronics are resources that are too valuable to waste, and we can help both our economy and the environment by recycling them.

OPEN VERTICAL PIPES ARE DEATHTRAPS FOR BIRDS AND WILDLIFE

Open top vertical pipes are a hazard to birds, lizards, small mammals and other wildlife that get into these pipes and are unable to get out. Birds looking for nest cavities, animals escaping from predators or lizards just scampering into open pipes are frequently trapped. This leads to a miserable death from starvation and exposure, which is completely unnecessary. Please look around and you will find open top vertical pipes on signs, fence posts, survey markers, buildings and irrigation systems. Landowners should cap, close remove or screen all open topped pipes on their property to benefit the birds and wildlife.

TOWN CONTACTS:

Town Chair: Diana G. Smith
715-425-5478
Supervisor I: LeRoy Kusilek
715-425-6185
Supervisor II: Siri Smith
715-425-1339
Supervisor III: Tom Sitz
715-425-7853
Supervisor IV: Brad Mogen
651-303-9028
Town Clerk: Ruth Stern
715-425-7373
Treasurer: Caroline Hamilton
715-425-2585
Zoning: Jerome Rodewald
715- 425-0228
Highway: Brian Weber
715-425-9901
Recycling: Michele DeLong Reiter
715-425-9901 or 715-425-1477

Town of River Falls
Clerk, Ruth Stern
W8378 760th Ave.
River Falls, WI 54022

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PERMIT #31
RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

RIVER FALLS EMS
FIRST RESPONDER RECRUITMENT

Looking for ways to help serve your friends and neighbors? Did you know that River Falls EMS has a first responder program that helps reduce the gap between a 911 call and the arrival of the ambulance? First responders live in the rural areas and respond to a medical emergency directly from their homes. They are equipped with basic life-saving supplies and a defibrillator. First responders usually arrive on the scene within minutes of the call and begin to provide medical care while awaiting the arrival of paramedics. If this sounds interesting to you, River Falls EMS is currently recruiting first responders and EMT's. Classes are held in the fall semester, usually 1-2 evenings per week for

two months at CVTC in River Falls. Once your training is complete, the requirements are to attend a monthly business meeting/training held at the EMS station the first Wednesday of the month from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. If you have any questions or want to know more about first responders, please contact Jeff Rixmann, Director - River Falls EMS at 715-425-0370 or jrixmann@rfaas.org.

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*Thank you to our spring newsletter contributors: Roy Lund, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee; Dan Randall and Dennis Zielski, Town Parks & Recreation Committee; Ruth Stern, Town Clerk; Michele DeLong-Reiter, Recycling Administrator; Jeff Rixmann, River Falls Ambulance Director.*  
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