

April, 2013

[www.riverfallstown.com](http://www.riverfallstown.com)



# Town of River Falls Annual Newsletter

## Inside Information:

- Glass Valley Cemetery
- Farmland Preservation Committee
- Recycling Center Information
- Unlicensed Vehicles
- 2013 Road Work
- Burn Permits
- New Website
- Contact Information



Rita Kozak  
Town Treasurer

## 2013 Open Book /Board of Review

Town residents are advised that the 2013 Open Book and Board of Review dates have been scheduled. The Open Book will be held on Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at the River Falls Town Hall, W9015 770<sup>th</sup> Ave. from 1:00 – 3:00 P.M. The Board of Review has been scheduled for Thursday, June 6<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 8:00 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. Appointments are not required, but they take priority over “walk-ins.” If you are unable to make the Open Book session and still need to talk with the assessor please call Associated Appraisal at 1-800-721-4157. If property assessment issues are not resolved through the Open Book process 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 e-mail: [clerk@riverfallstown.com](mailto:clerk@riverfallstown.com).

Only town residents whose assessment values have been adjusted from last year’s figures will receive notification in the mail prior to the Open Book session.

## Changes in the Town Treasurer’s Office

The Town of River Falls would like to introduce Rita Kozak as our new town treasurer following the April 2<sup>nd</sup> spring election.

Rita has many years of work experience in both government and business. She is a former member of the Pierce County Board of Supervisors serving on the Finance, Solid Waste, and Land Use Committees. Along with her husband, Garrett Gill, she co-owns a local River Falls business, (Gill Design Inc.) and is employed as a buyer at

the Whole Earth Grocery.

The Town would also like to recognize and thank outgoing treasurer, Caroline Hamilton, for 26 years of service to the Town of River Falls! Caroline’s first town board meeting was on September 3, 1987 when she stepped in to complete former treasurer, Mary Moon’s term. Caroline then ran for 12 consecutive terms as town treasurer. She worked closely with three town clerks over the years: Betty Hanson, Janet

Huppert and Ruth Stern; and three town board chairs: Dean Bergseng, Louie Campbell and Diana Smith.

Caroline recalls the days of collecting taxes at 10:00 at night in her home. Those days are past now that Pierce County has streamlined and automated the process of tax collecting on behalf of the town.

The major job responsibilities of the town treasurer’s position include managing and depositing the town revenues, accounts receivable and dog licensing.

# Cemetery Comes Back to Life After 150 Years

*“County records show both (cemetery) names. It’s time to reduce The confusion. It’s GLASS VALLEY CEMETERY.”*

## TOWN CONTACT LIST:

**Diana Smith, Chair**  
715-425-5478

**LeRoy Kusilek, Supervisor I**  
715-425-6185

**Siri Smith, Supervisor II**  
715-425-1339

**Tom Sitz, Supervisor III**  
715-425-7853

**Brad Mogen, Supervisor IV**  
651-303-9028

**Ruth Stern, Clerk**  
715-425-7373

**Rita Kozak, Treasurer**  
715-425-8554

**Town Shop**  
715-425-9901

**Jerome Rodewald, Zoning**  
715-425-0228

**Michele DeLong-Reiter  
Recycling Administrator**  
715-425-1477

**Dean Albert, Building  
Inspector**  
715-425-7907

**Associated Appraisal  
Consultants, Inc. (Assessing)**  
1-800-721-4157

**LeRoy Kusilek, Animal  
Control**  
715-425-6185

There is something new at the old Greenwood Valley Cemetery!

- \*New name
- \*New caretakers
- \*New management

**The Name** has been changed from the original Greenwood Valley Cemetery to the common name, GLASS VALLEY CEMETERY. One reason was to reduce the confusion with Greenwood Cemetery in River Falls. The City of River Falls was first known as Greenwood. When postal service was established it was discovered there was another Greenwood in Wisconsin, so the name was changed. When this Cemetery was established in 1863, the Glass Family served on the founding Board of Directors. Forty years later when a school was built across the road, the area was known as Glass Valley - in honor of the prominent Glass Family. The Cemetery was commonly called Glass Valley Cemetery until

research was done to put up a sign. County records show both names. It’s time to reduce the confusion. It’s GLASS VALLEY CEMETERY.

**The Caretakers** for the last 50+ years have been the Town and Country 4-H Club. Every year the club gets new members as old ones graduate. Club leadership changes as leaders children grow up and move on. But the same club with the same sense of community involvement, is involved today. Several hundred young people have learned a sense of pride and commitment by volunteering at the Cemetery.

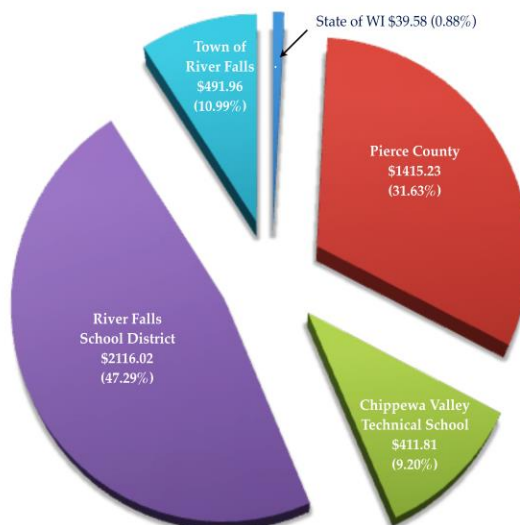
**New Management** The Town of River Falls agreed to take over control of the Cemetery in 1948 when it was abandoned. Nothing was done with the Cemetery until 10 years later when the Town and Country 4-H Club asked if they could clean it up and keep it

mowed. The Town contributed a small amount each year for gas for the mowers. In 2008 the Town hosted a “THANK YOU” celebration for the 4-H kids that spent 50 years taking care of the Cemetery. At that celebration, attended by about 200 people, the question was asked, can anyone buy lots here? Now in 2013, the answer is clear. The Town of River Falls, through its Cemetery Committee, is ready to sell lots. Contact Jerome Rodewald at 715-425-0228 or Diana Smith at 715-425-5478. The proceeds will go into a separate fund to provide future improvements to the Cemetery.

**History** Additional information about the Cemetery can be found on the town website and the World Wide Web by searching or googling the Glass Valley Cemetery, River Falls, WI. The Cemetery was inventoried in 1983 by Mickey Franzmeier.

## Where your 2012 real estate taxes go...

(data based on a \$274,000 parcel)



Dan Randall Parks & Recreation Committee Chair; Jerome Rodewald, Zoning Administrator & Cemetery Committee Chair; Michele DeLong-Reiter, Recycling Administrator; Ruth Stern, Town Clerk; Diana Smith, Town Chair, Rita Kozak, Town Treasurer; Roy Lund, Ad Hoc Committee Chair; Newsletter Editor: Ruth Stern

## Town Parks & Recreation News

The Town of River Falls has four parks that are ready and waiting for local residents to get out and walk or jog their trails. Each has a unique setting with changing views as the seasons change. All parks are conveniently located within 15 minutes from the River Falls High School. Three of the parks are on the south end of town and one on the west side of town. One of the parks that is ready for you right now is Halverson, located at the round-about at Highway 65 and Cemetery Road. The second is South Ridge, located a short distance from

Cemetery Rd and 975<sup>th</sup>/Centennial Rd. The third is Rocky Branch with access at the end of Devon Lane and down the access road. The fourth is Hillwood and can be found 1/8 of a mile down Hillwood Drive/880<sup>th</sup> Street off County Rd M as you're heading out of town to the west. Exact directions and specific details on each park can be found on our website [www.riverfallstown.com](http://www.riverfallstown.com). Besides members of the Parks and Recreation Committee, these parks have been maintained by the River Falls Lions Club, Masons, local residents

who want to see these parks flourish in their natural state and the Town of River Falls Maintenance Department. Don't let their efforts go unrewarded. Get out and visit our parks soon. Work is being done in 2013 to get two more parks ready for your use.



## PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES

Some Town of River Falls business owners may have been surprised to get a notice from Associated Appraisal Inc. regarding the possibility that their business may be subject to the payment of personal property taxes. The State of Wisconsin is one of approximately 30 states that has tax laws requiring a tax on personal property assets that are used as part of a business operation. Associated Appraisal will continue to work with our town business owners to answer any questions you may have regarding payment of personal property taxes. Associated Appraisal can be reached at 1-800-721-4157.

## Farmland Preservation Committee

Our committee meets on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 P.M. as published in the River Falls Journal and on the town website. It is an open meeting and land owners within the town are invited to attend. The committee's charge is to develop a Farmland Preservation Plan as required by the Working Lands Initiative promulgated by the State of Wisconsin. In order for our plan to be certified by the state it must be coordinated with the Pierce County Plan. We have been given criteria from the beginning as to what is expected from each political subdivision within the state meaning county, town or

village. They may identify land that is zoned agriculture and how that property fits into a preservation plan. We have sent our final draft plan to the county and are waiting for their evaluation of the plan. The plan we submitted identifies, by map, farmland that is 70% or more productive and lands that are not. The plan does not preclude parcels that have been used historically to grow agriculture products and have produced greater than minimum gross profits set forth by Wisconsin law. These parcels may be eligible for tax credits. Our goal is to have a plan that not only meets the

preservation standards, but allows land owners to receive tax credits based upon criteria set forth by the Dept. of Agriculture. The latest "yellow light" is a draft by the Department of Agriculture that re-evaluates statutory and rule authority on several issues such as rule content, preservation zoning and farmland agreements. We will remain as vigilant as possible as we navigate through new deadlines and potential changes to protect the rights of our land owners. As someone once suggested to me, don't throw away your 'leisure suit' it may come back in style.

## TOWN BURN PERMITS

Town burn permits are available at the Town Recycling Center on Saturdays (and also Wednesday evenings during the spring, summer and fall), or from a town employee or elected official by appointment. More information is included in the Recycling section of this newsletter.

### **TOWN WEBSITE**

**[www.riverfallstown.com](http://www.riverfallstown.com)**

*Have you checked out the new town website? During 2012 the town worked with Town Web Design Inc. to revamp the town website. The website contains current information on many of the town's programs and activities. The website also contains contact information, election results, and meeting notices and minutes. Two sections of the website are currently "under construction". This includes the Town Code (which is currently being worked on by the Planning Commission) and the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's).*

### **Unlicensed/Abandoned Vehicles**

The River Falls Town Board receives several complaints each year regarding unlicensed vehicles sitting on private property. River Falls Town Code (Section 10.07) allows for up to two unlicensed vehicles on a property within public view. Three or more unlicensed vehicles on the same premises in public view is considered evidence of a junk or salvage

yard and would require a salvage yard license.

Vehicles such as these that are left for more than seven days are considered to be in violation of Town Code and can be removed from the property. The Town Board plans to begin addressing legitimate complaints. During 2013

town residents with more than two unlicensed vehicles sitting on their property in public view will receive information detailing the town regulations on unlicensed/abandoned vehicles. They will be asked to take steps to rectify the situation by addressing the complaints that have been received by the town board from the public.

### **2013 Road Work**

Please remember that the right-of-way on a town road is 66 feet consisting of 33 feet from the center line on each side of a town road. County and state roads have different standards. 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, or gardens in the right-of-way areas.

The Town of River Falls has 60 miles of road to maintain each year. The board is currently working on developing a list of road work for 2013 based on the needs that are documented on the 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.

