

News from the Town of Utica Officials ~ July 2015

THANK YOU! Supervisor Donavon Bradley ~ 920-589-6854

I would like to thank the land owners of Utica who have removed old roadside fences. Also thank you to everyone that mows their roadside property and beyond. This ale helps keep our town looking neat. Thanks again!

RUSH LAKE Supervisor Chuck Kuhrt ~ 920-589-5033 ~ uticasupervisor1@gmail.com

At 3070 acres, Rush Lake is the largest pothole east of the Mississippi River. Its water level has been debated since the 1800's. Several damn's have been built and removed from the 1840's through 1960's. In 2001, Rush Lake Watershed Restoration Inc. was founded with the purpose of connecting the community with various governmental bodies to collaboratively work to restore Rush Lake. Rush Lake Steering Committee is made up of members from the towns of Nepeuskun, Utica, Rushford, and Ripon, along with the DNR, and US Fish & Wildlife. The steering committee meets quarterly throughout the year at the Waukau Youth Center at Waukau, WI. These meetings are a forum to discuss options and get ideas on the table. For more information, go to: RushLakeWI.com.

ROADS Chairman Leonard Schmick ~ 920-850-0758 ~ buildsubway@prodigy.net

When it comes to the roads in the Town of Utica, they are by far the majority of the Town's budget. As Town Chairman and Supervisors, we take the roads maintenance very seriously and try our best to get the biggest bang for our buck. Over the past several years, we have had great opportunities in our town to save large sums of money by using the county's waste, as in road grindings, for fill and roadside grading materials. Gravel is very expensive and if we did not have the free grindings from the county, we would have spent tens of thousands more dollars on what we did get accomplished in our town. Each year as a town board, we do road inspections with the aid of the County, both early spring and late fall, to determine the condition of the town roads. We drive every inch of the 43 miles of town roads and try to determine which roads need the most attention. After the road inspection is over, we have a meeting and go over our findings to determine priorities and costs and come up with a plan of attack. Of course there is only so much money to accomplish the repairs we have to do so we try hard to determine which roads simply can't wait for repairs, and which roads will be best served with simple patching and or sealcoating. We also try each year to pick out a road that is in need of complete grinding down and rebuilding, this is based on the fact that some of our roads are simply layers and layers of seal coating, and have never been properly built with a good base and solid layers of blacktop. Roads have a point at which they will completely break up without some kind of sealing or patching and our goal is to always stay ahead of that happening. In some cases, waiting one year too long can take a road that may have been able to be sealed for \$8,000.00 to the point where it will cost \$50,000.00 the next year to fix that same road. The other items that fall into the road budget for our town include snow removal and salting during winter, and roadside maintenance which includes ditch mowing, and tree trimming and removal, in some cases. I feel that we have made great strides in improving the costs of both mowing and brush and tree maintenance in our town. Last year was our first year to rent a tractor and mower and hire someone from the area to mow our ditches and to do brush control in our town. The savings were over 50% and the quality of work I feel was much better as well. We, as a town, have always had insurance that covers the rental of this equipment and the person who is driving it, so there was no extra cost there. In looking into this before we started it, we found that more towns do what we are now doing to control cost in ditch work, than do any other form of ditch maintenance. It seems to be the most cost effective to rent these types of equipment rather than to buy and maintain our own. At this time, we are having some problems getting the mower as soon as we would have liked because of the extra rain this spring, but I believe in general, over the years it will still be best to save the money by renting and doing our own mowing, and put up with a few extra weeks of long grass in our ditches. Snow removal in our town is done both by a local contractor that we sign a contract for every year, and the county as well. When we get large snow falls, it is the best for the residents of our town to use this two vendor system to get the roads clear as soon as possible. It is not always perfect, I know, and there are some issues that arise from time to time, but overall it has worked very well for what we pay to have it done.

\$\$\$ TREASURER TIPS \$\$\$ Treasurer Brenda Morrell ~ 920-589-4110 ~ uticatreasurer@gmail.com

Here is a little background information about me and my role as your Town Treasurer. I am Brenda Morrell and I am a CPA. I work part-time at the Green Lake Conference Center/Lawsonia Golf Course complex in Green Lake. I have been there for approximately 2 ½ years as the VP of Finance. Previously, I worked for the public accounting firm CliftonLarsonAllen for 22 years in various roles including: audit, business valuation, outsourcing services and consulting. I have been married for almost 23 years and have three children. My husband Mike is a social studies teacher at Oshkosh West High School. My oldest son will be a sophomore this fall at UW-Whitewater majoring in business education. My daughter will be a junior at Oshkosh West High and my youngest son will be entering 7th grade at South Park Middle School. In my role as your treasurer, my main duties include: sending and processing tax payments, processing town deposits and taking to the bank, verifying cash disbursements and mailing checks processed by the Clerk, issuing dog licenses, tax payment verification for real estate transfers and providing a monthly report of cash-on-hand, cash receipts and cash disbursements. I also assist the Clerk with payroll, budgeting and year-end financial reporting.

PROPERTY TAXES:

- All tax bills are public knowledge and are provided at the county website immediately after they are input into my database in mid-December. The link to the website to look up **copies of tax bills** is:
<http://wcws10.co.winnebago.wi.us/LandRecords/PropertyListing/RealEstateTaxParcel>
- Address changes should be given to me as soon as possible. I gather the changes and turn them over to the county prior to tax bill printing. This is the **ONLY** information that I can change in the property tax system – I cannot change names or amounts.
- Tax payments can be made via mail, in person at the Town Hall, by appointment, or dropped in the box on my porch. The policy in recent years has been to provide receipts to those that desire one having the tax payer send a self-addressed stamped envelope. If your payment is made via a check directly from your bank – I typically send a receipt so that you are aware that payment has been made.
- I process the December and January tax payments only. At the beginning of February, I hand over all payment information to the county and the website link above is then updated for payments made to me in December and January. July payments are processed by the County and should be sent them, not to me.
- Dec/Jan tax payments follow the postmark date of the envelope. As long as payments are postmarked properly – they will be credited to the proper tax period and not considered late.
- There is a very small grace period after Jan 31, for a tax payment to be made. If tax payments are not postmarked the first few days in Feb, it is considered late. The payment is then due in full and starts accruing interest. The ability to pay in 2 installments is taken away once the tax payment is considered late.
- Taxes are based on the assessed value of your property. The assessor is the only one that can change that value. Open Book is the proper venue to discuss any discrepancies that you may have with regard to the value of your property. If you and the assessor cannot come to an agreement for the value, then you can appeal at the Board of Review. In that proceeding, the best proof to convince the Board of Review members that the appraiser's value should be changed is verbal testimony of an independent appraiser. An appointment needs to be made for Board of Review.
- Town taxes are based on the cumulative assessed value of the town's property and the town tax levy. The levy is a calculation based on the budget that is put together by the Town Board in Oct/Nov each year. The budget is put together by estimating the expected revenues and expenditures for the following year and presented to the public and approved by the majority of the citizens at the budget hearing. ***This is the best venue to express concern for the tax rates.***
- Lottery credits are issued for those people that own and live in their house on January 1. If that is the case and you do not have a lottery credit on your tax bill, I can issue the lottery credit applicable to your property. However, to do so, I need to have the lottery credit form on file signed by you, the taxpayer, stating that the information is correct. Once I have that in hand, I can issue the credit. If I think a lottery credit may be applicable, I try to put a form in with the tax bill before I send them out, but the credit can be issued any time before Jan. 31. Just ask me for a form.

DOG LICENSES:

- All dogs within the Utica Township are required to be licensed. If a dog is picked up and taken to the shelter and was not licensed, the owner will be charged with all shelter costs associated with the drop off.
- To properly process a license – I need a dogs' rabies certificate. The certificate should include the date of vaccination, manufacturer of the vaccine and the serial number on the vial (along with dog particulars as to color, breed and whether they are spayed or neutered)
- Please provide your cell phone number as you update your license records this year and going forward. Land lines are slowly going away and it is getting harder to find people when I have a question or we need to locate you as we have your dog.

TOWN WEBSITE: Clerk Jenny Sonnleitner ~ 920-410-0347 ~ utica1730@gmail.com

Yes, the Town of Utica does have a website, townofutica.org. There is a lot of useful information there and is a work-in-progress as I get time to upload more information. You will find contact information for all the elected officials and other Town contacts. You can sign up to receive notices via email and your mobile device by going to: townofutica.org/sign-up. Please go there and register as I will be using this option to keep residents up-to-date with what is happening in our town in the near future. Some interesting facts about our website: July 2014-July 2015; we had 3152 visitors, 14% being from mobile devices; 2386 using desktop computers; 551 mobile devices; 215 tablet users. Please continue to visit our website frequently for added information.

GARBAGE & RECYCLING / DUMPSTERS:

Please contact Advanced Disposal if you need additional recycling or garbage bins at 920-685-6666. There is a fee for additional bins. The special assessment on your tax bill is for the curbside service and the current bin use. Every home in the town is assessed this fee whether it is occupied or not. If you have any disputes, please contact the Chairman or Supervisor and attend the next Board Meeting for discussion and for the Board members to take action. When you place the bins out on collection day, please keep them 3' apart so the arm on the truck can easily grab the bin and empty it. Only the designated bins will be emptied by the driver. If you have any piles, bags, or other containers next to the Town bins, they will not be disposed of. If you have a dumpster and were charged for garbage & recycling on your taxes, contact Advanced Disposal to work out a credit on your dumpster invoice. The Ordinance is located on the website for your review under the "Ordinances" tab.