

December Report
2015

Wisconsin Township Association

W7686 County Road MMM
Shawano, WI 54166-6086



WEB SITE:
www.wisctowns.com

EMAIL:
wtowns@frontiernet.net

How can town officials help further on EMS / Fire issues? Often in between legislative sessions, the legislators study issues of statewide concern. These are referred to as Legislative Council Study Committees. Legislators have until January 30th to provide ideas on what issues might be studied. We encourage you to communicate your legislators and ask that they consider submitting this as a topic to for a Legislative Council Study Committee.

Legislative Update

The legislature has been extremely busy in recent months, hence the higher than average volume of legislative alerts in the last few weeks. Here are several updates.

We had asked you to influence legislators to become co-sponsors of a bill to empower towns with the ability to permit manure piping in the road right-of-way. The legislation, which is being sponsored by **Senator Petrowski** with Assembly leadership provided by **Representative Edming**, has now received bill numbers, **AB 518 and SB 390**. You were successful in your requests as we have a good number of co-sponsors.

Piping is an increasingly used technique to distribute manure to fields. Appropriately used, manure piping has many advantages, including getting weights off the roads, decreasing traffic safety concerns, and decreasing the potential for an acute environmental problem resulting from a manure tanker spill. Although the technique is now widely used, the legal authority to permit manure pipelines is unclear. This

legislation explicitly allows, but does not require that towns permit manure pipelines and allows towns to require conditions to protect roads and public health and safety. This bill is a result of WTA collaboration with multiple stakeholders. It addresses multiple challenges and maintains local control.

Representative Kerkman has circulated three bills regarding assessment/Department of Revenue practices that we are extremely excited about and asked you to communicate with your legislators about to obtain co-sponsorship. **As you might already know, there are some that still feel local control of assessment is a problem.** Admittedly, there are some challenges with the assessment system in Wisconsin. **I've been told by a legislator that the local Boards of Review are the problem.** We respectfully disagree on this matter.

One problem that we know exists is the unwillingness of the DOR to revoke licenses of problem assessors. One of the aforementioned bills, **LRB 3062**, would allow the DOR to suspend a license for up to 12 months. Eliminating bad assessors or forcing them to improve would certainly enhance the system.

LRB 3061 would decrease the time a community could be outside of the 10% valuation window from seven years to six years. Some argue that this needs to be tighter, and we're more than happy to be a partner in improving the assessment system in Wisconsin.

LRB 0818 codifies the recent voluntary practice of the DOR providing preliminary equalized values to municipalities on or before August 1. This has aided clerks, treasurers, administrators, and boards in the budgeting process.

Please consider communicating with your legislators and asking them to support these three bills.

The **comprehensive planning repeal bill, AB 371/SB 266**, unfortunately continues to move forward. In my November article I noted many of the reasons that this is a bad bill. Many, many, many stakeholders are against it, while one conspiracy theorist who thinks the Bavarians are controlling Wisconsin was the only citizen to testify for it. It has moved out of Senate Committee on a 3 – 1 vote (1 person absent), despite pressure from local town officials on several committee members. The next time you communicate with your Senator, please let them know we hope they will listen to the voice of the towns, counties, cities, villages, realtors, and the farmers who testified at the hearing.

Frac Sand Conference – December 14th

For several months we've been asking you to hold the date of December 14th for a Frac Sand Conference sponsored by the Wisconsin Farmers Union and WTA. A conference flyer, agenda, and registration form is included in this magazine. Registration is only \$25 if received by December 8th. Registration can be sent to the WTA office. Please check with our office for space availability if registering after December 8th.

District Meetings

District meetings are coming up in February, March, and April. An announcement with locations is included in this magazine. This year there are 15 locations. We have again ensured that there is at least one Friday and one Saturday location in each district and attempted to provide that the travel time for any one person is limited to 90 minutes or less one-way. Of course, most will be much closer.

A full agenda will be included in next month's magazine. This is a Board of Review training year. The entire morning will be Board of Review training. In the afternoon, we have already confirmed that the DNR will be providing education on culvert placement, replacement, best management practices, and permitting, including the recent changes to the permitting process.

Ag Community Engagement Workshops

The winter Agriculture Community Engagement (ACE) Workshops have been scheduled. ACE is a partnership between WTA, the Wisconsin Counties Association, and Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin intended to provide education and networking between and amongst the agriculture, local government, and the broader community. An announcement and hold the date notification is included in this magazine. The full day workshops will be held in Eau Claire on February 16th and Wisconsin Dells on February 17th.

The workshop agenda is currently being finalized and will focus on at least: