

YORK



T o w n



News

December 2008

Town web site:

www.townofyork.org/

York Town Board meets every 2nd Tuesday of the month, 8 pm
e-mail: townboard@townofyork.org

Chairman: Dan Reeson
chairmanreeson@townofyork.org
608-523-1331

1st Supervisor: Dan Truttman
supervisortruttman@townofyork.org
608-527-5089

2nd Supervisor: Steve Hermanson
supervisorhermanson@townofyork.org
608-523-4513

Clerk: Nancy Anderson
yorktownclerk@townofyork.org
608-523-4529

Treasurer: Nathan Ula
treasurer@townofyork.org
608-523-4308

Assessor: Wayne Damrow
608-876-6704

Plan Commission meets every 1st Tuesday of month, 8 pm

Chair: Curtis Moen
608-527-2261

H. Sean Shilling
608-523-1125

Kelly Hermanson
608-523-4513

Don Anderson
608-523-4039

Heidi Hankley
608-523-4095

What do you want to see in your Town newsletter? Send your news to
YTN Editor: Carrie Czerwonka
yorktownnews@gmail.com

AGRICULTURE PLASTIC COLLECTION STATUS

21 NOVEMBER 2008

—MARK MAYER, GREEN COUNTY UW-EXTENSION AGRICULTURE AGENT

Green County farmers responded to another opportunity to dispose of waste agriculture plastic from silo bags, wrapped bales, milk house soap and acid containers, and plastic twine during a recent two-week period at the Green County Landfill. Twenty-nine producers from 13 of the 16 townships in Green County brought in 31,420 pounds of used agriculture plastic during the recent November collection program. The plastic was compressed into bales weighing approximately 2,300 pounds each. (see **AG PLASTICS**, page 2.)



THE DEAD OF GREENS PRAIRIE CEMETERY LIE BENEATH PRECIOUS PRAIRIE PLANTS

—MARILYN JAEGER

All grasses and 120 “compass plants,” whose leaves point only north and south, won the day at a hearing before Judge James Beer at the Green County Courthouse Wednesday, September 17. Petitioners, who were in the courtroom and represented by the county attorney, sought to have the Greens Prairie Cemetery in the Town of York mowed on a regular basis, in respect for those buried there. (see **CEMETERY**, page 3.)

NOVEMBER ELECTION

—NANCY ANDERSON

The presidential election is now history, but what an election it was. Our voice in York was heard as it was around the country when we voted 342 for Obama/Biden and 180 for McCain/Palin. At this time last year we had 474 registered voters, but when the polls closed on November 4th, we had 600 registered voters with 543 actually casting their votes. That was 91% of all registered voters. Great job, citizens of York! (see **VOTE**, page 2)

AG PLASTICS (continued from page 1)

Based on the success of the 2008 collections programs, Green County would like to offer another Ag plastic collection program in the spring of 2009. Unfortunately, we were just informed today that the company (AGSI) we had partnered with to take the Ag plastic has dissolved, and that some of the former partners are currently trying to restructure the business under a new name. AGSI was the only company in the area that was willing to take used Ag plastics. Until another company can be secured to take the plastic we will not be able to schedule any further collections in Green County.

The first collection program last March garnered over 50,000 pounds of plastic from Green County farmers. The latest collection brings the total amount of used Ag plastic collected in the county to over 40 tons, which equates to approximately 82 cubic yards of landfill space that did not have to be used for the plastic disposal.

Editor's note: Even though burning agriculture plastics is illegal, many farmers have been doing so for years due to the cost of disposal, and the fact that the plastic could not be recycled. York Town began setup for town recycling of ag plastics, but now there is no option to continue because of AGSI's closing. When we are able to do this again,

VOTE (continued from page 1)

I don't want it to go unnoticed that we have a very dedicated staff minding the polls. They all attended training in preparation for elections, allowing the day to go smoothly for you. Thanks to Audrey Klosterman, Marilyn Lokken, Sue Watrud, Beverly Jensen, Dorothy Peterson, Marilyn Jaeger, and Stephen Van Hout for the valuable service they provide to our Town.

York does not have a policy for early voting, but if you have a concern that for some reason you might not be able to vote on an election day, I am able to help you by issuing an absentee ballot. Keep this in mind for future elections. While we did have 48 absentee ballots issued for this election, some overseas from the UK, Norway, Iraq, and New Zealand, and others temporarily out of state, the majority of these ballots were simply from local citizens with commitments out of the area on that day, and a few with health issues that would have made it difficult to appear in person. If you find yourself in a situation for future elections, please do not hesitate to contact me, and I will be happy to make arrangements for you to vote by absentee ballot.

Once again, citizens of York, thank you for showing your pride by doing your civic duty and turning out in impressive numbers on election day to show support for your candidates.

there will an update on the town web site, and an e-mail alert will sent out to town residents on the e-mail list (to sign up, contact Nathan Ula). The DNR's recommendation is "for now, send any plastics you cannot recycle to the landfill, rather than burning or burying them on your land." To read about the effects of illegal burning, view the DNR web site, <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wm/recycle/newpages/agplastics.htm>. For more information about this collection effort, contact Township Chairman Dan Reeson.

NOTES FROM THE TREASURER

—NATHAN ULA

Property taxes: Once again this year you can pay your property taxes online using a credit card. Another option is to pay with an electronic check (debit) from your checking account. An advantage to paying by e-check is that you get confirmation of your payment and can print a receipt immediately. Both of these payment options are available through the secure county web site (www.co.green.wi.gov). A link to this will be provided on the town web site (www.townofyork.org).

A listing of the 2008 tax roll will also be posted there. Collections at the York Town Hall will likely be on the last Saturdays of December and January to coincide with recycling center hours. Anyone mailing their payment and wanting a receipt must include a SASE or the necessary postage. Escrow checks exceeding taxes due will be accepted and the overpayment refunded to the taxpayer. Any two-party checks need to be endorsed by the taxpayer. Dog license fees remain unchanged: males and females, \$9; spayed and neutered, \$4; multiple dog fee of \$35 for up to 12 dogs and \$3 for each additional. A copy of rabies vaccination records is required to be on file before a dog license will be issued.

What is a mil rate and how is it determined? A mil rate is basically the dollar amount of tax per \$1000 of assessed value. When all levies have been set (see **TREASURER**, page 5)



Postville Blacksmith Shop in the late 1800s. The blacksmith at anvil is Andrew Tompson. The Tompson family lived above the shop. Photo courtesy of Bob Bergman.

AWARD-WINNING
PROJECTS MADE
AT HISTORIC BUSINESS

Postville Blacksmith Shop

N8126 Postville Rd.
Blanchardville, WI 53516
608-527-2494

**Gates, Railings, and
Subcontract Forging**

Local Flavor

Postville Blacksmith Shop has been in business since 1856. It is the last business remnant of the hamlet of Postville which had a store, mill, post office, cheese factory, and harness shop. The original owner was Norwegian Andrew Tompson, who ran it for 50 years, eventually selling to Swiss immigrant Carl Blaser in 1910. Carl sold to Bob Bergman in 1969.

The shop today does farm repair, ornamental ironwork, manufacturing, and gunsmithing. There are five employees—Terry Suthers, Lucas Suthers, Dieter Wiegang, Dennis Novinski, and Bob Bergman. The shop has forging, fabricating, and machine shop equipment, and specializes in custom projects. View the project gallery and read more about the history of the business and Postville at www.postvilleblacksmith.com.

CEMETERY (continued from page 1)

The cemetery has been in existence since the early 1800s, with 102 marked and unmarked graves. Seven Civil War soldiers and their wives are buried there, and one veteran from the War of 1812. There have been no burials there since 1920, and no immediate survivors are known in the area. The 1¼ acres belongs to the Town of York, with a small portion owned by the county. Eighty years ago a cemetery association made a concrete fence to keep cattle out of the plot. In 1992 New Glarus resident Kim Tschudy wrote an article for the Capital Times entitled "Native Grasses Thrive in Postville Cemetery." At that time, there were three members of the cemetery association: Elmer Ott, Andy Aslakson, and Lyle Klosterman. Klosterman is the only member remaining.

Greens Prairie Cemetery is the last of a 5000-acre prairie of native tall grass in the county. Prairie Enthusiasts, led by John Oschner of the Town of Sylvester in Green County, spoke on the witness stand urging preservation of this ancient history. Mowing, like animal grazing, would forever destroy the unique grasses, the compass plant, and the wild quinine which is an endangered species present there.

Oschner spearheads a burn of Greens Prairie every May, so that by Memorial Day veterans' graves are honored by the American Legion with flags and visitors can easily find the graves. While most visitors to the cemetery come to see the native prairie, a few visitors seek genealogical information. Both facets are vital.

Judge Beer summarized with the fact that the state requires that local governing bodies maintain cemeteries, but he admitted that the state does not give direction on what "maintain" is. As long as an association of seven members has now been formed, and a policy developed to maintain and preserve the prairie while recognizing those buried there, that will make sure the association is perpetuated, this would suffice. New markers, signage, a map of gravesites, removal of noxious weeds and trees, and regular burning are part of the policy. The Association is to work with Keith Ingwell, County Veterans Services Officer, to restore or replace markers on graves of veterans.

—Originally published in the *Pecatonica Valley Leader*, 25 Sept. 2008. Reprinted here with permission.

RECYCLING QUESTIONS? ASK KAREN

—CARRIE CZERWONKA

Household recycling capability has not dodged the pull of America's markets. Plastic shopping bags are a clear victim; they used to be recyclable, but as of right now, they are not. Recycle America/Waste Management will no longer take plastic shopping bags in York's single-sort recycling stream, even though they often have the proper recycling numbers stamped on them. I spoke with several people at Waste Management, and finally with a Recycle America representative, who explained how she would really LIKE to take plastic bags, but there is nothing they can do with it, as nobody is buying the end recycled product right now. So, what to do with your bags? Some stores have collection boxes at the entry where you can deposit them for recycling; otherwise a good option is to purchase reusable canvas shopping bags—and canvas never rips! (Paper bags are still recyclable.)

Because of the volatile markets, recycling rules are quick to change. If you have questions about the recyclability of any item, just ask Karen Hughes (klhughes@tds.net). Karen is our new York Recycling Center Supervisor, after Tommy retired this year.

So what exactly IS recyclable now? Some other confusing plastics include soda bottles, clear berry containers (no. 1 or 2), and yogurt tubs. Yogurt tubs and ice cream containers are not recyclable either because of the shape of the container, or the fat content in the product that you can't clean off effectively. Keep in mind that cleanliness is an important factor in recycling—an item must contain less than 5% food particles in order to have recycling value. Numbers 1 and 2 are generally recyclable, in any shape. Numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 need to have a narrow neck or a wide screw top. This is because items with these types of tops are typically easy to clean, as the contents contain liquid. All caps and rings need to be removed.

Oh, buckets! Big, five-gallon buckets (or other sizes) are recyclable, just be sure to remove the metal handle (the handles is not recyclable).



Karen demos the town's new billboard. Post your business card here!

Aerosol cans must be empty, with less than 5% content. Tagboard and cardboard need to be broken down to conserve space.

Some nonrecyclable items include tires, microwave trays, mirrors, window or auto glass, light bulbs, ceramics, porcelain, unnumbered plastics, coat hangers, glass cookware, toasters, tissues, paper towels, and paper that has been in contact with food.

Hazardous materials like dry cell batteries, fluorescent light bulbs, electronics, and medical waste cannot be disposed of at all with York's Saturday (and summer Wednesday) waste collection. Some can be taken to the Town Cleanup or the County Clean-Sweep Days, or you can buy a kit on the Waste Management recycling site, www.thinkgreenfromhome.com. Need more info? See last year's newsletter, available on the York web site, or just ask Karen. Thanks for your efforts! ♻️

Town of York Recycling Center hours:
Saturdays 8 to 12 am year-round
Wednesdays 5 to 8 pm, June through August

The York Clean Sweep Day is usually held once a year.
Tune into the Town Board meeting minutes at
http://www.townofyork.org/draft_minutes.htm
for date announcement.

REMEMBERING WINDMILLS

—CARA CARPER, COMMUNITY RESOURCE EDUCATOR
GREEN COUNTY UW-EXTENSION

Remember when the Green County landscape was punctuated by windmills? Most of those windmills are gone, but nostalgia for “old fashioned” windmills has led some entrepreneurs to carefully disassemble and reassemble windmills as lawn ornaments or museum pieces.

When I gather around the Christmas tree with my extended family in Green County, talk will certainly turn to “the old days.” Discussions of generations of neighbors, their farms, businesses and even pets will entertain young and old.

Have your family gathering conversations ever turned to windmills? Windmills are often associated with the ingenuity, hardship, success, and failure of early residents to this area. People often have a favorite windmill they remember from their childhood. The Green County Land Conservation office estimates there were once 4,600 windmills in Green County. Windmills weren’t just interesting yard ornaments; windmills harnessed the wind to pump water that enabled early residents of Green County to settle where there was no nearby surface water.

The tower visible above-ground was only half of the windmill. A water well punched a hole through the ground to water. Once the tower was gone, the well often remained, unseen and forgotten.

Why remember them now?

Unused water wells that have not been properly plugged leave open holes in the ground. These holes are dangerous! People (especially children), pets and wild animals can get hurt or trapped after falling into a well. (Remember “Baby Jessica” who fell 22 feet into an 8-inch well in the late 1980s?) These holes are also direct channels for anything on the surface to end up in our drinking water. Usually we rely on our soil to filter out bacteria, silt, and chemicals before they reach our drinking water, but an old well provides a direct pipeline deep into the ground.

Ask any local well driller, and he will tell horror stories of new wells drilled, and later found to be contaminated by a nearby unused, unfilled well. It ends up being a very costly mistake that could have been avoided.

The only way to reduce safety hazards and groundwater contamination caused by old wells is to plug them. However, there’s more to plugging a well than simply dumping something down an open hole. As of 1 June 2008, a licensed well driller must be hired to properly fill in old wells. Usually bentonite is poured into the well. Bentonite chips are a special type of expanding clay the size of gravel. Bentonite swells to form an impenetrable layer when exposed to moisture. For wells of a smaller diameter, grout may be used.

Getting unused wells filled is so important to the quality of drinking water in Green County, the Land Conservation Department will pay 70 percent of the cost to plug a well. The total cost for a landowner to fill an “average” well that is 100 feet deep and 6 inches wide is estimated to be \$600. If that landowner signs up with the Land Conservation Department before December 31 (and before they plug the well), Land Conservation would pay \$420 and the landowner would pay \$180.

As you gather to celebrate the holidays, think about our precious resource of clean water. When you talk of the “old days,” encourage memories of windmills and old farmsteads. If you know of sites that may have unplugged wells, let the landowner know. If you are a landowner with an unused well, contact the Land Conservation Department at 608-325-4195. They will help you fill out the request for funding. Happy Holidays!

Do you have an unused water well on your property? Contact the Land Conservation Department at 608-325-4195 before December 31st for assistance with the cost of plugging.

Vision Statement for Town of York

We envision the Town of York as a rural farm-friendly community maintaining quality ground water, managed woodlands, wildlife and streams. Residences are located to preserve productive farmland. Population density and retail development are controlled by a land use plan.

Upcoming Events at the Town Hall:

20 January 2009

7:30 pm, Caucus

8:00 pm, Public Hearing
for the Plan Commission’s draft
of the York Land Use Plan

TIERED LAND DIVISION ORDINANCE IN DRAFT STATE

— THE TOWN OF YORK PLAN COMMISSION

The Plan Commission presented a draft of the new tiered Land Division Development Ordinance to the Town Board at their meeting on Tuesday 11 November 2008. A draft copy of the new ordinance has been posted on the internet at <http://townofyork.org/planning/minutes/newtiereddivisionv4.pdf>. The Board is reviewing the draft and next steps will be coming soon.

When reviewing the draft, the Plan Commission would like you to keep the following in mind:

- We believe Tier Two of the ordinance meets all of the vision of our comprehensive plan.
- All external consultant comments were reviewed and included in draft appropriately.
- We are the first township to attempt to protect over 50% of the townships land.
- Planning commission took into consideration the rights of existing land owners and weighed it against our future vision. We believe this is a fair compromise. Fixing potential problems caused by past administrations without impacting the rights of current land owners is a delicate balancing act.
- The Plan Commission is willing to update the ordinance if Tier Two is not adopted willingly.
- No matter what land is sold or divided, land owners do NOT have to sell 20-acre parcels. The township only uses that number to determine the number of lots a land owner has available to sell.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

—DAN REESON

Greetings Town of York Residents, Here we go plowing snow again! If you see Wayne or Eric out plowing, please slow down and give them some extra room. To clear the center of the road they have to use more than one lane to do the job right, and when they're working intersections please stay back until it's done or they let you pass. I can't thank them enough for the work they do and all the hours they put in.

For all of us plowing our own snow, be careful out on the roads. A lot of us push snow across a town, county, or state road. It is against the law to do this. But the more snow we get, a lot of times it's the only option. If you do, make sure the snow piles are not left in the right of way, these snow piles get hard and can break equipment.

It looks like it could be another winter with snow-packed roads. The Town of York salts and chips intersections, sharp corners, and steep hills the most. Last winter we had a few complaints on snow-packed roads, but the less salt we use the better for our roads to come through the winter without breaking up. Right now it could cost up to \$100,000 a mile to put down new black top, when most years we only spend \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year on highway repairs that cover 41 miles of roads. Please slow down and be careful.

Last year York had to do a reevaluation that upset lots of folks. According to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, residential parcel equalized values were at 88.13% in 2006 and 85.23% in 2007. If the equalized value falls below 90% for 2 years out of 5, the town has to do a reevaluation. If there is a change in your valuation you will get an assessment change notice in April or early May; if

you don't agree with this, go to the open book and Board of Review usually both in May. Dates will be posted and in the papers.

I would like to thank some people for all their work: Nate Ula and Nancy Anderson, York couldn't run the same without them. Nathan is finishing up 30 years as treasurer: Great job, Nate!

Dan Truttmann and Steve Hermanson for making my job more manageable. Wayne Bue, the guy you always see in the equipment. Eric, for helping Wayne when he needs it. Karen Hughes for the great job at the recycling center, and Dorothy and Raphael Peterson who work the recycling center Wednesday nights in the summer.

Plan Commission: Curtis Moen, Kelly Hermanson, Sean Shilling, Don Anderson, and Heidi Hankley for all your hours of work, I hope they start to pay off soon.

Our building inspector, Mike Finnley, making sure it's done right. Our assessor, Wayne Damrow, I wouldn't want his job during the last year's revalue. Our Poll workers, Nancy Anderson, Audrey Klosterman, Marilyn Lokken, Sue Watrud, Dorothy Peterson, Marilyn Jaeger, Beverly Jensen, and Steve Van Hout made it all look so easy.

Carly Harris for keeping the Town Hall clean. Carrie Czerwonka for the good-looking news letters, you started something good. And, of course, the best for last—my wife, Mareen—couldn't do this without you! Merry Christmas to Everyone.

**FREE PIANO to good home.
Contact Steve Hermanson at
523-4513**

TREASURER (continued from page 2) by the state, county, township, schools, and vocational districts, a mil rate is computed for each by dividing the amount levied by the total assessed value. Residents of York have one of three mil rates, depending on which school district they reside in. The mil rate seen on the tax bill is the state mil rate + the county mil rate – the county sales tax mil rate + the township mil rate – the school tax credit mil rate + the mil rates for the school district and vocational district in which the taxpayer owns land. Typically, as assessed value increases the mil rate decreases.

This table shows the impact of the residential revaluation that was completed in 2008. The Town experienced 4.6% new growth for the period, but most of the increase in assessed valuation was due to the state-mandated revaluation. The Town levy increase was also 4.6%, and the mil rate for York decreased by 11.7%.

	2008	2007
Assessed valuation	\$88,684,652	\$76,192,493
Town levy	\$210,850	\$201,575
York mil rate	0.00234	0.00265
Total mil rate per district		
New Glarus Schools	0.01766	0.02001
Pecatonica	0.01931	0.02050
Argyle	0.01837	0.01984



Wayne Bue, Town Patrolman, strikes a pose. Ever wonder how York's steep banks get mowed? Here's the secret—rented weaponry. Thanks Wayne, for all that you do for York!

TOWN OF YORK BUDGET

WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE HEADING

—2ND SUPERVISOR STEVE HERMANSON

Town of York has had a challenging year, but in the end we still have a positive balance. The vast majority of items stayed on course, but a few things have changed. Road salt and sand almost doubled in price and because of the tough winter, our tonnage was up. Fuel was also up for the same reasons.

In the 2008 budget we put aside \$18,000 for a new mower, on which we spent \$8,500. We also put aside \$15,000 in 2008 and another \$15,000 in 2009 for the new fire truck for the New Glarus Fire Department (this is York Township's share and is calculated by population). We also have two plow trucks that are aging and will need to be updated within the next few years. Starting in 2010 we will set aside \$15,000 per year for a new truck. A new truck costs approximately \$125,000. We will very likely be looking at a used truck.

In 2010 we'll also set aside \$15,000 per year toward possibly buying land for a larger Town Hall. Presently, what we have is serving our needs. If we continue to grow at the pace we have in the last 10 years, we may outgrow our current space. We are currently renting shed space for some of the equipment. If our growth slows, we may be able to take our budgeted money for the Town Hall and put it toward the plow trucks.

In summary, our budget is tight, but we're trying to meet the needs of the people while remaining fiscally responsible.

YORK *Town News*
c/o Nancy Anderson
N8791 York Center Rd.
Blanchardville, WI 53516



WHAT IS A CONSERVATION EASEMENT?

—HEIDI HANKLEY

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a qualified land trust or government entity that permanently limits certain uses of the land in order to protect specified conservation values such as agricultural land, wildlife habitat, or other natural features. Conservation easements are a flexible tool because they allow landowners to continue to own, use, sell, or transfer their land while still protecting the agricultural or natural values of the property. Conservation easements offer permanent protection because they run with the land not the owner, and the land trust assumes the legal right and responsibility to enforce the terms of the easement with current and subsequent owners.

Although some easements are purchased from landowners, most conservation easements are donated. When donating an easement, the landowner and land trust or government entity work together to decide what restrictions are needed to protect the land's conservation value while considering the personal and financial desires of the landowner. By donating an easement, the landowner gives up the specified rights, for example, the ability to subdivide and develop the land, but continues to enjoy all the other rights of ownership. Conservation easements do not require public access to the property, and easements can cover just a portion of a landowner's property. Most land trusts require that a stewardship endowment be set up with each easement agreement to cover the expenses of monitoring, enforcement, and legal defense of the easement terms.

A conservation easement donated to a qualified conservation organization can be treated as a charitable tax deduction as long as federal tax code requirements are met. The value of the donation is the difference between the full market value of the land without the conservation easement and the value after the restrictions of the easement have been applied. This value is assessed by a qualified land appraiser. Donating an easement may have other benefits, including income tax deductions, reduced property taxes, and reduced estate taxes.

Conservation easements are a flexible tool that can help preserve the agricultural lands and rural character of our town. More information can be found by contacting the organizations provided at right.

American Farmland Trust
www.farmland.org
202-331-7300

Gathering Waters Conservancy
www.gatheringwaters.org
608-251-9131

Natural Heritage Land Trust
www.nhlt.org
608-258-9797

Editor's note: Conservation easements are being considered as part of York's land use plan. To learn more, attend a Plan Commission meeting, first Tuesday of each month at the Town Hall, 8 pm.

