

“Keep the Valley, We’re Movin’ to the Countryside”

There is a very good reason that "moving" is always cited as one of the leading causes of personal stress and family tension, and that is simply because it is impossible to make the one without acquiring the others. Whether it's your first move or your twelfth, uprooting and transplanting is always a 'shock'. One flower or a garden-full, one person or a house-full, it will take (hopefully not 'much') longer and cost (hopefully not 'much') more than you thought it would. But if you plan well, and prepare for a bumpy road, the trip won't be shocking. After all, we take maps and water on a hike and snacks and magazines for a road trip because we know that good preparation makes for a good trip. The moving process is no different: the more you know BEFORE you go, the better your arrival will be when you get There. So, welcome to the Town of Caledonia! Make yourself at home and build for yourself a uniquely personal life Out Here.



Let's begin with the obvious and work our way to the subtle.

Be prepared:

* **"The Neighbors"** is a topic that is no less a gamble in the country than it is in town because you just never know who -- or what -- will be a neighbor. When the real estate agent shows you an idyllic scene of peacefully grazing dairy cows scattered over lush pasture, don't forget that that bevy of beautiful bovines goes out and comes back in twice a day, and their feeding, milking, servicing, and cleaning up after will activate all five of your senses. 'The Neighbors' might have dogs; or they might raise chickens, sheep, or pigs. Or they might have all of that and a couple horses. In short, 'The Neighbors' intend to enjoy their country life the way they see fit. Just like you do. So, when Farmer Jones spreads the manure from his own animals onto his own fields and travels at 10mph on the road between those fields, you learn that "farm traffic" is a real thing. And when Mrs. Smith takes up the raising of sheep or goats for fiber, milk, and meat; or when Bobby Johnson decides that he's going to raise rabbits, turkeys, and a milk cow for this year's 4-H Projects, you'll be reminded that farm animals are noisy and smelly. Even after you learn that Mr. Williams hunts, traps and fishes for every furred, winged, hooved and scaled creature in its season, remind yourself that all these things define rural life, and that being "in the country" doesn't change the vital role that all those Neighbors will play in your life

* **Country dark** is darker than city dark, but fear not, the moon is a fine replacement for streetlights. A full moon in a clear sky is surprisingly bright, and a full moon in a clear winter night sky, with snow on the ground, will cast shadows that rival the day's.

* Speaking of winter, out here, **winter is colder** (but summer is cooler) because there is so much less paved surface to soak up the sun's energy and radiate it back after dark. And since there IS less paved surface, walking and biking is different out here, so be sure to know the roads, their residents, and their rules.

* **Birds, bugs and the occasional bat** (if you're lucky), will share your space whether you want them to or not. Songbirds, birds of prey, and wild turkeys will all accept the easy meal that feeding stations offer. The seasonal songbirds (hummers, orioles, buntings, etc.) will appreciate feeders designed for their needs, while the year-round dwellers (jays, woodpeckers, cardinals, etc.) are less picky about presentation. Don't be surprised when a jay hops to the suet or a woodpecker tries a seed now and then. But, beware: the birds of prey like an easy meal just as much as the songbirds do, and will keep an eye on the feeding stations. And what about the turkeys, you wonder? Well, let's just say they're like obnoxious houseguests who come too often and stay too long, and leave it at that.

* There are all manner of **bugs and insects** in all manner of places. Some chew, some sting, some just flit about. Having a good bug book that specifically covers NE Wisconsin will be helpful: be a knowledgeable host and they'll be good guests. And if you are lucky enough to host a few bats, thank them for their service.

* **Wild Animals**---you will see chipmunks in the woods or groundhogs in the open; grey, fox, and the occasional black or red squirrel will all find their way to your feeding stations given enough time. Don't bother trying to thwart their efforts at thievery unless you enjoy being frustrated -- and bested. If you're willing to feed all comers, both you and they will be much happier. Skunks and Sandhill Cranes often show up in spring to dig and poke for June bug larvae. Deer are ever-present, as are racoons. A fox might pass through, especially if there's some barnyard poultry to check out, so if you raise poultry be prepared for predators and build accordingly. You might hear coyotes, but will rarely see a black bear, but the critters who will do damage to your feeders and make a try for your chickens come out at night, so bringing in the feeders and closing the coops is a must. Also, it's best for everyone -- wild and domestic -- if you keep your dog(s) in the kennel or the house at night.

* Your Country Life Learning Curve will include "**landscaping**", which involves water consumption and chemical usage. Here are the guidelines: plant so that neither will be a factor. We are all on an aquifer, so we're all on a finite well system. As for chemicals, whether for the growth of desirables or the control of undesirables, remember that what goes onto the ground soaks into the ground and eventually will make its way into our aquifer.

* **Gunfire**: One of the principal reasons we live out here is to be able to enjoy firearms on our own or nearby land for hunting and / or target practice. The Township boasts several ranges, so the chances are very good that you'll hear gunfire year-round. Shotgun, rifle, handgun, compound and crossbow regulations are quickly found on both Waupaca County's and Wisconsin's DNR web-sites.

* **Protective Services**: We are covered by the Waupaca County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement, and share fire departments with surrounding municipalities, depending on the need. The Town has two ambulance services: Gold Cross north of the railroad tracks and Fremont Ambulance south of the railroad tracks. There is only one EMS service for the whole Town and that is Dale Fire and Rescue, which is part of the Dale Fire Department. All "911" calls go through the Waupaca County Dispatcher who coordinates these services.

* **Utilities:** By now you know that there is no "city water" or "city sewer", and our "power grid" is best and easily strengthened by a home generator (you'll need one). As mentioned earlier, take care with your inbound and your outbound water. If you haven't already, you'll eventually add a "Well Guy" and a "Septic Guy" to your list of contacts.

* **Home energy choices:** We're on We-Energies' electrical grid, and liquid propane ("LP") powers many of our homes' furnaces and stoves. Natural gas is available in certain areas where the population is relatively dense and commercial customers are located, which means it generally follows State 96 and it services the subdivisions. The rest of the Town relies on LP gas, and many homes enjoy wood heat.

* **Roads:** In winter, the snowplows work their way OUT from the Waupaca County garages to our roads. Sometimes we get plowed, salted AND sanded. Sometimes we just get plowed. And sometimes we're not on The List at all. Which means that, like a generator, a 'bigger snow-blower' would be a smart investment. And you'll need to find a "Plow Guy". Remember: the rule of thumb for everything Out Here is to plan for 'lousy' in times of 'fair'.

* **Parks:** We have one established park, and another is in its initial stages. Readfield proper is where our Town Hall and "Readfield Park" are located and is available year-round to all residents. There is a pavilion, ballfield, open space, and plenty of parking. For large gatherings, check with the Town Clerk about reservations. Most years the annual Caledonia Days is a popular event held in Readfield Park, as is the Food Truck Rally. The new park will be north of Readfield on a 47-acre parcel donated for the express purpose of building a public space. Its plans have been drawn and the application process for state Grants has begun.

* **Schools:** The Township is in the School District of New London which has a very user-friendly website (www.newlondon.k12.wi.us) to provide all the details you'll need. Locally, Readfield Elementary is within the Township and serves 4K through 4th grade students from the Readfield, Dale, and Medina communities. It's located on the same parcel as the Town Hall and Readfield Park. The middle and high schools are both in New London proper. Be sure to access available websites for the information you'll need to enroll your kid(s). Private schools in New London proper include Most Precious Blood (Catholic Pre-K & Elementary); Emmanuel Lutheran (Pre-K, Elementary, Middle). Homeschooling is always an option.

* **Shopping:** There's no other way to put it: you didn't move out here for the shopping, so be prepared to travel to New London or the Valley for everything: groceries, gas, home goods or hardware all require a trip to town.

* **One Last Thing,** and it really does overlap with several other topics. There's no telling what you will see, dodge, straddle, or otherwise try to avoid on the roads. Living things, dead things, broken things, strange things. Hopping things, running things, even slithering things. Depending on the season, and the road, you'll come across spectacles like a frog migration, or fox kits playing chase, or a spooked deer on a dead run. There will be walkers, runners and riders of the human and of the animal varieties, and all of them live Out Here, which makes all of them Neighbors. So be prepared, plan for challenges and settle in.

We think you'll love it.