The Town of Rhine Newsletter

Hello from the Town Chair, Red Platz

Let me begin my report by addressing the obvious: Changes to your local government caused by the Coronavirus.

On March 17th, the Town Board made the decision to cease conducting face-to-face business with anyone at the town hall. This decision was made to protect our clerks and officials as well as the public who may have business at the town hall. The office hours are still the same, Tuesday and Thursday, from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 pm. We are asking everyone to either 1) call the town hall at 876-3413, 2) call myself or the Supervisors, 3) contact us via our email accounts or 4) drop off correspondence/documents in the slot box at the left of the town hall entrance door. This policy will stay in place for the foreseeable future and we will post notification when it changes.

Secondly, we are attempting to limit the number of meetings necessary to conduct town business. I have asked the supervisors to schedule their various committee meetings only if there is a real need to take some action on a matter that cannot wait. While we want our meetings to be open and accessible to the public, we are asking residents to attend only if there is an urgent need. Comments and concerns may still be submitted via phone or email. At our monthly Town Board meetings I am asking two of the Supervisors to attend through a telephone hookup. If there is a situation of an anticipated or actual large turnout from the public, there may be a change of venue with a short notification. The possibility of doing some form of telephone or video conferencing is also being explored in order to offer more accessibility to the meetings

by the public. If this occurs, the public will be informed of these changes.

Along that same line, I want to say, "THANK YOU" to our clerks and poll workers for the outstanding job they did during the recent election. With all the health hazards and voting requirement confusion surrounding this election, they are to be commended for their efforts. Also, THANKS to all who either voted early or showed up on election day to exercise their right to vote.

GOOD NEWS
This is your Town of Rhine Collection Site

Recently I was contacted by a couple of town residents who had been out walking and had cleaned several ditches along the roadways of trash. They asked if I could pick it up and take it to our "dump" for them, as they would not be able to take it the next Saturday because of a previous commitment. While I am not in the habit of picking up trash at someone's home, I felt it was the least I

could do if they were good enough to put the effort into cleaning up OUR township. Thanks to them for their efforts and to several other residents whom I see from time to time who care enough about the environment to carry along a bag and take the time to pick up trash on their walks. With everyone following the "Safer at Home" order, I am seeing more people walking lately. Perhaps they could also help to make our township more beautiful by safely clearing the ditches of litter on their walks.

Our Collection Site is a valuable asset to our residents. As long as we all follow the rules and do not abuse this benefit it can continue to operate.

NOW THE BAD NEWS
This is not the Town of Rhine Dump

Another town resident and I, recently cleaned up an unauthorized dump site on Snake Road. Over the years large amounts of trash have been dumped illegally on this property. Because it is somewhat secluded and has a steep hill near the road, it seems that some individuals leave their

garbage in that area that the Town of Rhine would accept at the dump site. My thoughts are that these individuals either do not care about our township or they cannot afford the minimal fees that are charged to properly dispose of some of these items. Here is a partial list of the "treasures" we retrieved in one small area:

13 used tires
8 TV sets
1 computer monitor
3 LP tanks
1 used toilet, (slightly damaged from being thrown down the hill)
2 tractor fenders
1 dehumidifier
2 casement windows (broken glass from their "ride" down the hill)

We will be going back with a larger crew of volunteers to pick up all the glass bottles, aluminum cans and other junk that these individuals did not properly take to the collection site. I would ask these violators who are doing this how they would feel if someone were to drive by their property and just toss their trash out the window?

All of the above items were taken to YOUR collection site for disposal. Several of them require fees, from your tax dollars, to properly recycle or dispose of, such as tires, TVs, etc.

If you are one of the people improperly dumping, I ask you to STOP, and if anyone else sees someone doing this, please report them in order that proper action can be taken against them. Town ordinances state improper dumping is illegal and can result in substantial fines. A surveillance system has now been installed in an effort to identify violators.

This Township belongs to ALL OF US! I would appreciate it if we treat it as the beautiful piece of property that it is and not abuse it by dumping trash improperly. Also remember that the Collection Site is for Town of Rhine residents

ONLY! If you are bringing trash for friends and relatives from other municipalities, we are all paying for it and they are not. Do their tax dollars pay for your trash disposal?

Properties Committee by Larry Eberle, Fourth Supervisor

Changes:
- Upgrade the lights in the Town Hall with LED lighting.
- Added additional electrical outlets in the Town Hall office.
- Glass entrance door replaced with a wheelchair accessible door.

Who are We?

Town Officials and Contacts
Town Board Meetings are held the 1st Tuesday of the month (unless otherwise stated) at the Town Hall at 6:30pm. These are open to the public (under normal circumstances).

Town Board Chair
- Red Platz   920-390-0332

Supervisors
- Allen Feld   920-980-3827
- Jon Rost   920-980-4800
- Bill Jacob   920-627-2612
- Larry Eberle   920-889-5551

Clerk/Treasurer
- Lexann Hoogstra   920-876-3413

Deputy Clerk
- Catherine Loeffler 920-876-3413

Building Inspector
- Tony Leonard   262-364-9597

For Inspections Only   262-346-4577
The building inspector's hours are by Appointment only.

Village of Elkhart Lake/Town of Rhine Fire Department
- Pat Zorn   920-876-3333
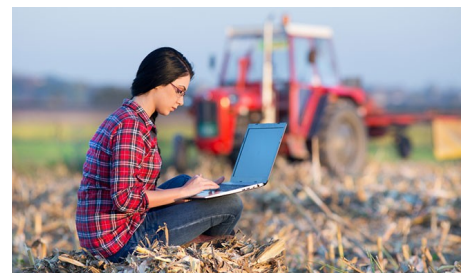
Village of Elkhart Lake/Town of Rhine First Responders
- Darren Lindstrom   920-876-3333

Broadband Committee by Jon Rost, Second Supervisor

Improved Broadband Access for the Town of Rhine

The Town of Rhine Broadband Committee has made some progress at addressing the lack of reliable and adequate broadband access in the town.
After considerable investigation and research, the Committee recommended to the Town Board that the town enter into an agreement with Bertram Communications of Random Lake to propose options for improved service. The Town Board approved a Memo of Understanding which would permit Bertram to build a communications tower on Town of Rhine Town Hall Property, subject to a detailed plan/proposal for a tower, subject to both public and Town review and approval.

The tower would have a line of sight range of up to five miles, and depending on terrain, could serve the majority of Town residents. This would be wireless broadcast signals to the homeowner not fiber optic cable.
Currently Bertram is also looking at a few other sites within the town which have greater vertical height potential. We are now waiting to hear whether they have been able to secure a different location, or whether the Town property would be best. Bertram is also working with the Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation on a potential County-wide Broadband initiative. While we would welcome involvement in this potential initiative, we would not want that involvement to delay access for Town of Rhine residents.

Roads Committee and Sanitation by Al Feld, First Supervisor

Dear Town of Rhine Citizens,

The town drop-off Collection Site is still open. This is a fluid situation. The attendants are onsite but may or may not help you, at their own discretion. Please be mindful of the situation and keep a safe distance. Also please break down and compact all of your trash and recyclables as much as possible. Last year we spent $71,589.28 on garbage, recycling, trucking and disposal. Of that total, trucking was 59.4% or $42,533.07. This is why it is important to break down boxes and debris to get as much as possible into the containers. We are going to issue new tags later this year. As always, please display them so the attendant can see them.

The Town is planning on resurfacing Snake Road from County Road EH to County Road MM this year. Sheboygan County's Highway Department is redoing the intersection of Snake Road and County Road MM. Snake Road will now intersect County Road MM at a right angle for better visibility. The small section of Kuhn Road east of Snake Road will be eliminated as well as the small section of Snake Road that is south of Kuhn Road. This may cause a closure of Snake Road north of MM for a short time. Please avoid this area as the work progresses.

The surface of Snake Road between Plateau Road and County Road A was raised approximately twelve inches last fall. We hope this will help prevent closure of the road this year. Hopefully, we will have a drier Spring this year to help this and other high water situations in the town.

Please stay safe and healthy and be kind to all you meet.

Ordinance Committee by Bill Jacob, Third Supervisor

Town ordinances to be more accessible, easy to search and up-to-date

The Town of Rhine will soon be working with a company named General Code to review and reformat town codes into a more organized and usable format. The decision to work with General Code was made after conversations with several Wisconsin municipalities currently using this service. When work on this project is finished, the complete context of our code will be available online in a format that is completely searchable and easy to use. New state and local ordinances will be added to the town code in a timely manner, in addition to making the overall code consistent in organization, format, style, and content. General Code currently works with 169 towns and municipalities in Wisconsin. According to town clerk Lexann Hoogstra, "We're excited to work with General Code to make it easier for town residents to find and use town ordinances in a comprehensive, up-to-date and understandable format. In addition, any changes can be incorporated into existing town ordinances in a more timely manner." Town residents will have 24/7 access to search topics and find information on their own, saving phone calls and trips to the town hall. Town staff will be able to better serve residents by simplifying information searches to give residents fast and accurate answers to ordinance questions.

A Note from your Clerk/ Treasurer by Lexann Hoogstra

Congratulations to incumbent Bill Jacob for being re-elected as Third Town Board Supervisor. Also, congratulations to Larry Eberle who was elected as Fourth Town Supervisor.

I would like to sincerely thank EVERYONE involved in the April 7th, 2020 Spring Election and Presidential Preference Primary. Our poll workers and employees and charitable neighbors made this election as safe as possible in light of COVID-19. We are grateful that you stepped up in a big way to help administer this historic election. We could not have done it without you. To the voters, thank you for exercising your right to vote!

Congratulations to our Deputy Clerk, Catherine Loeffler, as she received a Partial Tuition Scholarship to the UWGB Clerks and Treasures Institute which will be held in July. She was one of 33 other recipients from 93 applications received this year. We know how valuable these classes are toward her certification and in keeping up-to-date with ever-changing laws and responsibilities.

Lastly, certain interest groups have sent out voter registrations and absentee applications to our residents. Some are in the form of letters stating that you must re-register. These are frequently from a third party. Your clerk will not send out these letters. Often, they look as though they came from our office, however, they are incomplete or incorrect forms. If you receive one and are concerned that you are no longer registered, simply call us and we can let you know if that is the case. There are two more elections this year and you can bet your mailbox will be full of them. You can also visit http://myvote.wi.gov/ for registering and absentee ballot requests to double check your status.

Don Birkholz by
Catherine Loeffler,
Deputy Clerk

In early March of 2020, prior to Governor Ever's initial "Safer at Home" order, I had asked longtime Town of Rhine resident, Donald Birkholz, to come in so I could feature him in our "Get to Know Your Neighbor" article for our newsletter. He chuckled on the phone and told me most people probably know him, but he'd love to come in and do that. He said he knew what to say as, "I know myself pretty well!" It was always that great humor that made him such a pleasure to be around. When he arrived for our appointment, he handed me a photograph to include with the article. It was of a much younger Don with thick, jet-black hair standing next to trees with spring blossoms. I commented that it was a lovely photo, but asked if he wanted me to take a more recent photo. He replied, "I think I look pretty good in this one so let's use this." At the end of our discussion, he told me to stop by someday, explaining that neighbors frequently come over and sit at his kitchen table and drink and talk. He told me to bring my whole family, as he enjoyed visitors and children playing in his yard and tapping sap from his trees. My heart is heavy as I write this because he will not be able to read it. Don passed away on Wednesday evening, April 22, 2020. He was such a special person and will be deeply missed in the Town of Rhine.

"My name is Don Birkholz. I've lived in the Town of Rhine since the sixties. I served my country in the Army from 1951-1954 and was deployed during the Korean Conflict where I served as a Forward Observer (FO). After returning home to Wisconsin, I worked at Lake-To-Lake (now Land O'Lakes) for over forty years and raised my family in the Town of Rhine.

I've always loved woodworking and started Creative Picture Frames prior to retiring from Land O' Lakes.

My wife passed away in 2001, but we have a son, Steve, and a daughter-in-law, Alicia, who live close by with their two beautiful granddaughters. Also, Margie Gens has been my significant other for many years. She is one of my dearest friends and she's a great companion for me. We go grocery shopping together and she's wonderful company. I also have nieces and nephews and other family members whom I often see and visit.

My community is very important to me. I was employed at the Town of Rhine Collection Site for over twenty years and have worked as a poll worker in the Town of Rhine Town Hall for several decades. I have also helped with Town Hall maintenance. I find much enjoyment seeing all of the friendly faces coming in to vote. I really enjoy my wonderful neighbors and I am grateful for my dear friends and family. Lastly, I enjoy my love for nature which is why the Town of Rhine has been the perfect place for me."

Lynn Lisowe

Hi, my name is Lynn Lisowe. My husband, Chris, and I have been together since we were teenagers and we've been married 15 years. We have four wonderful children, our son Lacota,13 years old; daughter Dyani, 11; daughter Nayeli, 9; and son Aditsan, 7. We have always lived in Sheboygan County. My husband grew up in the Town of Rhine. After getting married and starting a family we decided to move out to the country and found a place in the town of Rhine closer to family. We love the spacious area allowing our kids to enjoy the outdoors and our woods.

I am a Girl Scout Leader for two troops and the Elkhart Lake Community Troop Organizer. With my Girl Scouts we attend the Memorial Day Celebration in the Town of Rhine in honor of our veterans. As a troop, we also have campouts in our backyard teaching the girls about nature and "leaving no trace." We join together as a Girl Scout community at Elkhart Lake carrying out traditions like caroling at nursing homes, practicing archery, and the girls favorite, a lock-in at school. We have over seventy girls in our ELG Girl Scout sisterhood!

Since living in the Town of Rhine, it has inspired me to expand on my creativity. I always enjoyed making handmade gifts for my family. I put so much heart into my creations that I decided to expand and make handmade gifts for others. I established Ldna Art. Ldna is the initials of each child in our family. I attend local vending events, fulfill orders locally and through Etsy. I love doing hands-on things like making jewelry, sewing, and working with wire and concrete. My most rewarding passion is oil painting! I enjoy teaching others how to work with this medium. When painting with the medium I also bring out doTERRA essential oils and help

others get inspired with the fragrance while feeling the therapeutic benefits. I also educate others on doTERRA essential oils, teaching a more natural lifestyle.

This year I also started working at Elkhart Lake/Glenbeulah school district in childcare. It has been so entertaining being around the children and seeing all the different personalities. This is such a heartwarming experience in helping care and guide the children of our future.

We have met so many wonderful people in our area. This township and community is so fitting for our family. We are so grateful to live and raise our children here. It DOES take a village (or township) to raise children, THANK YOU!

Information by
Tony "Doc" Leonard,
Building Inspector of Safebuilt

It is beneficial for every resident to know the zoning district of their property. Building and use requirements vary for each district. The most useful tool to research property information is found on Sheboygan County's Land Record site. This resource is easy to access by visiting www.sheboygancounty.com

- Click on "Land Records"
- Scroll down to the bottom right tile entitled "Zoning Map"
- Find your property
- The current zoning category will be listed

What does Razing mean?

Razing basically means demolishing or tearing down. A raze permit is required for all razing or demolition of structures in the Town of Rhine. An affidavit of disconnect is required from each utility company serving the structure and the sanitary line must be properly capped and inspected prior to covering. The site will be inspected to insure all debris has been removed and the area must be filled and graded.

Permit Applications

Permit applications for building, zoning and razing are available on the Town of Rhine website and at the office. There are two applications available. One is for a new home construction. The other one is for all other projects including zoning and razing (identified by the Safebuilt Logo in the upper left-hand corner). All project related information on the application must be completed, including square footage and project estimated cost of the project.

Thank you

Thank you to Fire Chief, Pat Zorn, for coordinating the cleaning of our marble Civil War monument with the help of Andrew Harper from Harper Pumping in Elkhart Lake, WI. Although no parade or picnic was held this year due to extenuating circumstances, we appreciate you taking care of this special Wisconsin historic landmark (dedicated in July of 1868) to honor the town's fallen soldiers.

Part-Time Job Opportunity - Office Assistant

The Town of Rhine is accepting applications for an Office Assistant. This person must be experienced with Microsoft Word and Excel. The applicant should possess good filing, telephone and interpersonal skills, accounting skills, including Quick Books. Town Rhine residency is preferred, but not required. Some of the job responsibilities consist of general office work, attending meetings, taking minutes, dog licensing, posting property tax payments, liquor licensing, assisting with elections and cultural events, and other office related responsibilities. The applicant should be available Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, as needed for approximately 10 to 12 hours per week. The salary range is $15.00 to $18.00 per hour based on qualification and experience as determined by the Town Board.

The successful applicant for this position may have the opportunity to advance to the Town of Rhine Clerk/Treasurer position. Please email a resume to clerk@townrhine.com.

How to Access Information about your Property Online

- Want a copy of your tax bill or payment receipt?
- Want to know what your property is zoned as?
- Looking to see how large your property is?

Please visit sheboygancounty.com

Click on blue tile called, "Land Records".
Then click on the purple "Land Records Web Portal" tile. You will then need to read and accept their disclaimer. Click on "I accept". From there, you can search any property under last name, address, parcel number etc.

For your taxes, use the TAX tab and pick the year you are interested in.
You can find aerial photos of the property and other interesting and useful tools. It is a wonderful resource for our community members. Enjoy!

Town of Rhine Employee Appreciation Day

August 25th, 2019

Dog Licensing

All dogs that are five months or older MUST be licensed before April 1 of each year.

License fees for male and female dogs are $14.

License fees for spayed or neutered dogs are $7.

Multiple dog tags (kennels) are $55.

No license can be issued without a rabies vaccination certificate.

If you no longer have a dog that was licensed in the Township last year, please call 876-3413 so that we can remove the dog from our records.

For dog licenses made by mail, please use the following address: Town of Rhine, PO Box 117, Elkhart Lake, WI 53020-0117. Checks for dog licenses should be made out to the Town of Rhine and must be a separate check from your tax payment.

Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope for dog license payments made through the drop box or the mail so the dog tag may be mailed back to you. Thank you.

Town of Rhine Meeting Schedule

Town Board
First Tuesday of each month
Plan Commission
Second Wednesday of each month
(if required)
Board of Appeals
Fourth Wednesday of each month
(if required)